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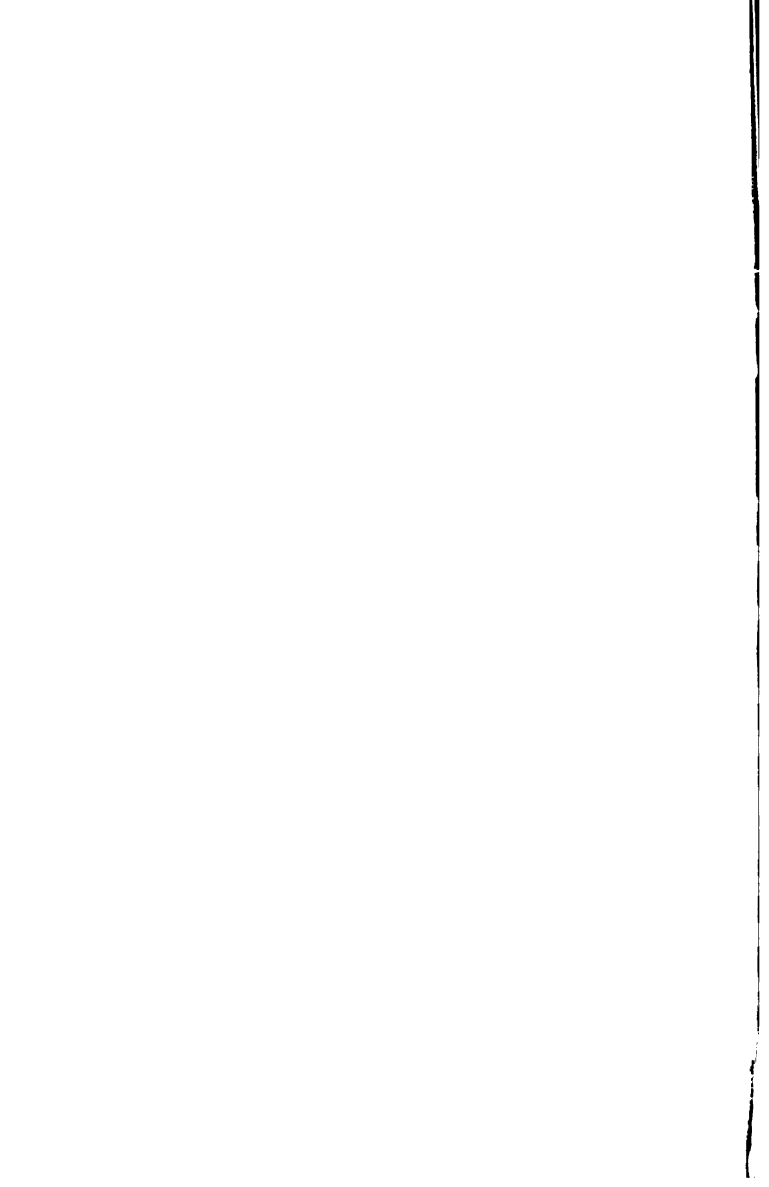
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# THE ANGLOMANIACS

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## THE ANGLOMANIACS.

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### I.

"WE shall send the dogs and servants at once to Washington Square," said Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, settling another little cushion in the curve beneath her shoulder-blades, as she leaned back in her steamer-chair on the deck of the *Etruria*, homeward bound. "My husband will of course meet us at the dock, and take all the bother of customs off our hands. It is possible we may sleep at home for a night, but I am more than half decided to take Lily directly to Tupelo. It will be in the middle of the week, you know, and there's no place so good to rest in as

Tupelo in the middle of the week. So soothing! Such an atmosphere. So unAmerican, in short."

"Ah, yes! there is nothing like Tupelo," murmured Mrs. Clay, whose manner conveyed a confidential tinge to her simplest utterance. In her heart she was saying: "Why, the woman is delicious! Who would suppose she had never been there, and that she knows I know it? It is all right. I am safe in taking her up this way. For a beginner she's immense."

"Mr. Curtis has bought land there recently, and is waiting for me to decide on the plans to build our cottage. One needs something to do away with the first impression of those nasty New York streets on landing," pursued the elder dame. "Actually,

the whole thing seems more dingy and deplorable to me every time I come back. Such a dreadful rattle in one's ears, the sidewalks so filthy and obstructed, the lower classes so presuming, and the sun glaring so you can't help seeing everything. Lily, if you'll believe me, likes it. She says it makes her blood jump. Why, when Lord Frederick told her his cab had gone into a rut and smashed a hat for him before he had driven a block away from the Cunard dock, last year, and that he'd half a mind to write a letter to the papers in complaint, Lily made fun of him so that he almost found it out. Such a tiresome child! One might think she had been educated in the States, instead of having every advantage Europe can afford."

They were two days out from Queenstown. It was a fine October morning, that brought up the invalids in force. The ship might have been a great floating hospital. All sorts and conditions of men and women were equalized by costumes and attitudes suggesting alternately a mummy and an Indian papoose. The deck steward, with fruits and drinks, was the hero of the hour. Conversation among those of the sufferers who knew each other had sunk to the lowest ebb. To keep up, to keep respectable, in most of them, precluded all mental as well as physical effort. "Please go away," breathed a bride to her beloved one. "I was just feeling better when you said 'Poor darling!' and now I'm ill again." "There is no use in your

being witty," another young woman remarked to the man who was endeavoring to make her forget her woes. "If I laugh, I'm gone."

Those provoking people whom the consciousness of the screw did not affect were variously disposed. Some were walking as if without intention to stop short of the other continent. Others formed into confidential if lethargic groups, holding novels, lap-dogs, parasols, turning their backs upon the ailing, each woman secretly wondering if shipboard was as unbecoming to her as to her comrade. With the two ladies we have to do with, matters had already progressed far beyond the usual unfolding of trivial plans and personalities common to voyagers at sea. Mrs. Floyd-Curtis (note, please,

the fashionable hyphen, now in such common use : it had been acquired and packed up with her latest batch of London stationery ; " Mrs. Eliphalet F. Curtis " the good lady had gone forth from Sandy Hook in May) was a fine specimen of the American woman in her forties. Her features were small and regular, her complexion was like a china doll's ; her dark hair, worn in scallops on her brow, was even at this hour elaborately dressed ; a veil of dotted lace covered the tip of her nose, and she was buttoned up in a tight-fitting Redfern suit of tweeds. The rug over her knees, half concealing an abject scrap of a thing she called an Algerian poodle, was of softest otter. The little cushions tucked in around her spine were of silk-covered eider-

down. They—the deck-chair, the rug, and the apology for a dog—had been brought out and put in place for my lady by an obsequious menial, who immediately after retired from service, and was prone during the rest of the voyage. This one act, however, performed with such radiant effect before the eyes of the other passengers, fully justified his engagement as a first-class traveling footman.

One could see in looking at Mrs. Floyd-Curtis that her figure was considered by her to be her strong point. She was of the well-developed, small-waisted type familiar in the cashier's seat of a French restaurant. The sole interruption to her self-complacency in this matter was the inevitable tendency of flesh compressed around the



waist-line to escape below it. No device of her men-milliners could entirely conquer this defect. Mrs. Curtis hardly ever forgot to be conscious of it. It chastened her moments of otherwise perfect satisfaction with temporal affairs. Little Mrs. Clay, on the other hand, was as indifferent as Sara Bernhardt is to considerations of close-fitting drapery. Her frocks wrinkled around her slim body like the long Swedish gloves upon her arms. They rose in peaks upon her shoulders, and were girdled by loosely clinging zones around her waist, the scant skirts escaping into curling waves around her high-heeled feet. Spiteful women compared her to a billiard cue, but Mrs. Clay was better than pretty—she was picturesque. Each pose was a

study for a Mendelssohn or Roseti photograph, and to both of these artists she had been a mine of suggestiveness. Everybody knows Mrs. Clay's photographs—the little childlike creature with the large wistful eyes and tiny mouth, sitting curled up in a *moyen-âge* arm-chair, or holding to a curtain with one arm above her head, or shading her cheek with a huge feather fan. There is a steady call for them in the shops where such things may be bought.

Mrs. Clay's title to sympathy for an Iliad of matrimonial woes, while conceded by New York society at large, was but vaguely understood. She was a New York girl, well placed, coming of a family of merchants who, by grace of a generation or two of wealth and

culture, took rank among later aspirants as if born to the purple. Ten years or so ago she had married Bertie Clay, a handsome young Englishman, son of a poverty-stricken lord, and had carried him in dowry a not inconsiderable sum of ready money. Cash was all that Bertie ever needed to make him good and happy, and for a time the Clays were seen and heard of on the top wave of London's "smart" society. Then rumors came to Barbara's old friends of domestic infelicity, of duns, of money borrowed from every American who could pay for a foothold on the social ladder where Barbara had already climbed.

Presently Mrs. Clay returned to New York without her husband. "Dear Bertie is on a yacht," she would

say pleasantly when asked about Mr. Clay. To judge from his persistence in this pastime during many years thereafter, the Honorable Bertie must have led a very Vanderdecken kind of life.

And then Barbara's father, who had always lived well, and had given good dinners, died, leaving his stricken dove of an only child a mere pittance of an income. Speculations had wiped out his bank account, and the world said Mrs. Clay would starve. But instead of starving, Barbara took a little nest of a flat in the Guelph apartment house in Fifth Avenue. It was six flights up, but there was a lift, and a boy in buttons to show visitors the way. Besides, Barbara was hardly ever at home, except to the few men

and women she elected to receive. She was always running off on little jaunts to Newport, Lenox, Bar Harbor, England, Trouville, Homburg. She had become a Little Sister of the Rich. People asked her on yachts a good deal, and she was a connoisseur in country houses. She was at no expense for gloves or flowers, and what could such a little woman eat? The "Honorable Mrs. Clay" was the glory of the society newspapers, and it was known that visiting dukes and countesses resorted, on arrival in America, to the sixth story of the Hotel Guelph. Naturally, New Yorkers asked no inconvenient questions.

Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, who had often heard of the famous Mrs. Clay, had met her for the first time at an im-

promptu breakfast party, assembled in Lily's honor, at Homburg, by an exalted personage. The Personage had seen Lily, and thought her—as indeed she was—the prettiest and most daz-  
zlingly fresh creature of the year. He brought about the presentation of the girl and her mamma, and with much courtesy bade them to breakfast. Lily, as is natural in a girl unjaded by gayeties, jumped at the breakfast, and appeared there in a pink frock and hat, looking like a rose of June. With this her success began and ended, for the willful maiden, to her mother's woe, at once gave unmistakable token of preferring the society of a handsome young guardsman to that of the giver of the feast. Worse still, upon remonstrance, had not the terrible girl

flatly told her mother that she did not like talking to the Personage because he was too old, and that equally she *did* like talking to that beautiful young man? These things are written in the chronicle of Homburg summer gossip. Upon Barbara Clay, who was a former chum of his, had devolved the task of consoling the Personage. Then, for the first time, she perceived the attractions of the Miss Lily Curtis, who had thus fallen, as it were, from a chariot of fire to the common sidewalk. The little incident of Lily's contumacy at the breakfast, however, was cabled to America by a correspondent of the New York press, and in the end, perhaps, better served the purpose of advertisement of a coming beauty than otherwise. Various paragraphs about

the young lady had, in the month following, been diligently circulated by the society writers for the best known newspapers. The age, complexion, hair, height, of Miss Floyd-Curtis was now definitely known at every club, corner grocery, and wine-room in the metropolis. A description of the gowns made for her by Worth and Félix had even found its way before the public. One enterprising journal gave a Sunday column to the illustrated catalogue of the boots and shoes and stockings to be worn by the fair maiden in walking, riding, and dancing along the rose-strewn path awaiting her. This charming article was thoughtfully laid, by one of his clerks, before poor Eliphalet F. Curtis, and had almost succeeded in making the



honest father break a blood-vessel in fruitless wrath.

If any one had foretold to Mrs. Floyd-Curtis that her return voyage to America was to be gilded and glorified by the intimacy of Mrs. Bertie Clay, she would not have believed it. But after Homburg the ladies had met in Paris. Mrs. Clay was gentleness and thoughtfulness itself to both mother and daughter. Her vote decided every toilet made for either, she was seen continually in their carriages, she introduced them to more fine people than they had ever dreamed of. How perfectly delightful, therefore, that she should have decided to take passage on their steamer. For Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, be it known, although she possessed every external evidence of being

a genuine American great lady, knew in her heart that her place was not yet made. True, she had done much in a short space, but there were still women who put up their glasses at the opera and inquired who might she be. There were a score of houses never open to her when their awnings for a party were run out. There was even a Mordecai in her very gate, Mrs. Peter van Shuter, whose town dwelling adjoined that of the Curtis's, a consummate flower of fashion, who had not yet brought herself to believe in the existence of the Floyd-Curtis family.

Six years before the present voyage of the *Etruria*, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, with their two children, were living in a quiet cross-street in New York, content with the modest comforts accru-

to answer the front bell. After supper, Mrs. Curtis herself clearing the table, and depositing the dishes on the dumb-waiter with a quick and skillful hand, the family would unite around the melodeon to sing Moody and Sankey hymns. Curtis verily preferred these strident ditties, as piped by his two young ones, to anything heard at the operas or concerts, whither his wife occasionally led him lamb-like to the slaughter.

Thus, content and cheerful, twelve years of married life had found and passed them by. Then the astonishing news came that the speculative old father, who in his narrow way had doled out gifts to Mrs. Curtis from behind the desk of his grocery in a Western town, had died, leaving her a

fortune such as even in New York might entitle them to congratulatory comment. Eliphalet was fairly dazed when he tried to realize the income that would now be theirs to control. To his imperfectly developed civilization there seemed to be no way to spend it. Luxuries did not appeal to him; of amusements, he craved none. The world of books, of art, was sealed forever from his sight. In this crisis, as usual, the American wife rose grandly to the emergency.

"Do?" said Mrs. Curtis briskly. "Well, the first thing is to rent this house and go to Europe."

From that trip abroad Eliphalet returned bored and almost cross. His "store," his clerks, his thick-skinned junior partner, seemed to him worth

all he had seen across the water. The day he put on again his office coat of worn alpaca the merchant vowed a vow :

"Amelia's made all the fool she's going to out of me," he said to himself. "Let them do what they please with old man Johnson's money; I've come back where I belong, and I guess I've come to stay."

And so, in spite of the nagging of his wife, he doggedly kept on. What Mrs. Curtis at that epoch called "a society lady," on the board of one of her infant hospitals, had taken them up and landed them beyond their former level. They had purchased a fine house, furnished in admirable taste by a family who had no longer means to support it. The great embarrassment

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was new servants; even Mrs. Curtis was awed into passing humility by a head man who had lived with the Van Shutters. One of Eliphalet's most overt acts of resistance to social evolution was his way of eluding the attendance of a man to hold his coat and another to open his front door. To avoid this superfluity of tribute he would gladly have gone down a fire-escape. Day after day he slunk out of his lordly portal with the plate-glass swinging doors, not to regain an erect attitude till he found himself rushing with the rest of the mob to board an elevated train. The leveling effect of contact with the brotherhood of humanity in the business quarters of New York is, at most times, able to counteract even the depressing influence of

being served in whispers by the ex-butler of a Mrs. Peter van Shuter.

Early in the upward movement it had become clear that foreign travel was yearly indispensable. Mrs. Curtis loved her husband after her fashion, but she loved her children better, and for their sakes every effort must be made. She had the wit to see it was not her father's grocery or her husband's dry-goods that stood like lions in her path. Some of the most conspicuous of the people whose lead she longed to follow had sprung from the same beginnings. But it was the second generation among them who were lording it so gallantly, who were intermarrying with the great names of older civilizations, who were creating for their families the high place Americans

begin to crave when they begin to think. Upon her girl and boy this ambitious woman saw she must pin her fondest hopes. Hamilton, a stolid and commonplace youth of sixteen, she had succeeded in placing at school at Eton. Lily, now nineteen, with her red hair, hazel eyes, and cream-and-strawberry complexion, her figure erect and graceful as if the only pressure it had known had been the bark of a wood nymph's prison, was clearly as much the pride and stay of the Floyd-Curtis house as Nelson was of England at Trafalgar.

Naturally, then, the companionship of Mrs. Clay, who with graceful variations harped upon the one string, was both soothing and stimulating to the anxious mother on the eve of such a trial as Lily's coming out. "I am not



flattering—I never flatter,” rippled Mrs. Clay. “It is not I alone who think so. Why, the Princess Puzzuoli says that with her looks and your fortune Lily can marry anywhere in Europe—*anywhere.*”

Mrs. Floyd-Curtis shut her eyes. A vista opened before her mental vision that was a whirl of rose color. “Not on the Continent, dear Mrs. Clay,” she said modestly. “England, perhaps. At any rate, that is what *I* should wish.”

“England, of course,” said Mrs. Clay. She could not hide an inflection of contempt.

“All the English people we’ve met have been so very kind. I confess I had feared that Lily’s impetuous ways—her—her—”

“‘Flamboyant Yankeeism,’ Mr. Gore-Thompson called it,” suggested Mrs. Clay.

“We are from the Southwest originally,” rather stiffly answered Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, who took Yankeeism to cover the reproach of a New England birthplace. “My daughter’s spirits are certainly high. I had almost feared it would go against her in such circles as we have moved in.”

“You don’t know the English! Mrs. Tracy Brooks, who set out last spring to conquer London, flatly failed because she would insist upon carrying out her ideal of a Fifth Avenue *grande dame*. She had to go home, having acquired an English accent and an English curtsy—nothing else! She’s been sulking ever since. Wont

show at Newport, or anywhere. Lady Bell, now, proved her good sense. She played the banjo and danced nigger breakdowns for her husband's noble relatives, and her success is howling. It's quite time our women should find out that we can't outshine theirs on their own ground. It's all rubbish to say we can, in the face of those big, still, magnificent creatures, with jewels we can't begin to match. They don't care about us ; they think we are no better than our own cooks and chambermaids ; and the only way for us to leave any impression on their ranks is to make a circus of ourselves, with Barnum and Bailey inscribed upon our banners."

Mrs. Floyd-Curtis sighed. Vague notions of Lily in fleshings being shot

from a cannon into the air passed through her puzzled brain—and were dismissed as impracticable.

“When you consider that the only American periodical they read much in the Athenæum Club—I mean Lord Salisbury and the Bishops—is ‘Slings and Arrows,’” said Mrs. Clay.

“Is it possible?” said Mrs. Floyd-Curtis. She was conscious of a copy of that much discussed journal in her dressing-bag, bought in London the day she came away, and hidden from Lily’s sight. She really felt now that she might take it out.

“Well, we have nothing to complain of in the way they’ve treated *us*,” she went on. “I, for one, adore England—but my husband! The work I had even to carry my point about put-

ting my dear boy to school there! Mr. Curtis was all for having Hamilton go to St. Paul's, and afterwards to Yale. If we could have got him in at Groton, now: I admire the tone at Groton; the boys' mothers are all in the same set. But I've settled him at Eton; and though he doesn't like it much as yet, he'll be certain in time to see what advantages he has. Mr. Curtis pretends it will unfit him for living in America—when he's in the same form with Mrs. Peter van Shuter's son!"

"The one they call 'The Great American Terror'?" said gentle Barbara. "Harry van Shuter is, without exception, the most badly spoiled cub it has been my privilege to meet. And among the children of our ambulating Americans one has cer-

tainly a range of choice in *enfants gâtés*."

Mrs. Floyd-Curtis was shocked. It seemed to her just a little vulgar to call Mrs. Peter's son a cub.

"Ah, well! Boys, you know," she said apologetically. "No one can say I haven't always told my children when they did wrong. Often and over again Mr. Curtis has said, 'Do, Amelia, let up on that poor child.' But I considered that when the father is so much away in business the children ought to be the mother's care. Whether they were sick or well, I've never spared myself. Traveling about, and having so much notice taken of them, does upset children a little; there's no doubt of it. I shall never forget one trying winter I spent

at Cannes. Both of my young ones seemed possessed. That was the winter Lily had the measles."

A veiled but rather dangerous look came into the violet orbs of Mrs. Clay. In her secret soul she was tired to death of Mr. Curtis, of Hamilton's schooling, and of Lily's measles. It was only a shade better than when Mrs. Curtis chanted her cooks, butlers, first men, second men, third men, assembled from various nations to equip her household.

These were weary moments for Barbara. The cruelest cut of fate was to deprive her of the power to repay social martyrdom by insolence. Oh, for an income to enable her to be uncivil when she would! "I only ask to be a rich duchess for one short hour,"

she would say to her intimates. "In that time I would crush all the people who have bored and patronized me, and then die happy."

"I think I understand," she now said, with admirable patience. "There are always difficulties in achieving high results. But you have managed everything so well. If only New York were not so—what shall I say?—hard to count upon. With a *débutante* the start is everything."

"The newspapers," suggested Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, dropping her eyes modestly.

"Yes, they have done their share. Strange how they know so much," Barbara said guilelessly. "But I've seen many a newspaper belle who's gone up like a rocket come down



like the stick before the end of her first year. The trouble is to find out what New Yorkers really expect and ask. There's always room there, certainly. They crave constant novelties. When people come back to town, and the opera and Delmonico balls begin, the thirst for fresh gossip and sensation in the way of a new girl is something extraordinary. As I said, what exactly they require in her would be hard to decide: not old family; that is respected vaguely among us, and is handled like a piece of brittle porcelain—i.e. left upon the shelf. We have them, but they do not take the lead. Money is essential; but just look at the amount of money in New York, and then count the list of people one cares to receive or to visit. Original-

ity and wit are dangerous to own. The young men, especially, wont encourage them. As to literary tastes, they are impossible. Did you ever hear that Mrs. Peter van Shuter wrote a little book once, before she was married? The Van Shuters hushed it up, and the affair has been forgotten. Accomplishments—I mean the usual thing—don't count for much. All the foreigners we have now speak English, and prefer to do so. A girl in the swim hasn't time to paint or to draw, and there is no music listened to from amateurs. Beauty, after all, and a certain individuality in dress, would seem to be the chief requisites for success."

"I always say, cling to Worth, and he will never play you false," interjected the listener devoutly.

"A good *chef* is a powerful backer," mused Mrs. Clay. "And yet, at best, the thing's a lottery. Do you remember how Agassiz used to construct an entire big fish out of a single scale? I've seen a reputation for belleship built up on a bouquet of the same kind of flowers carried by a plain little girl to every successive ball; and wasn't Kitty Kershaw's nose tided triumphantly over her first season because her mother started some dinner-dances?"

Eagerly as Mrs. Floyd-Curtis was drinking in this accumulated wisdom, vitally interested though she was in Miss Kitty Kershaw's nose, she was not quite willing to appear to make a direct application of her Mentor's generalities. So she took refuge in the tiny white mop with eyes

and claws that nestled beneath her rug.

"Bijou! Toutou! Mignon! Chéri!" she cried, with punctuating kisses. "*Embrasse-moi donc.*"

It was a triumph of mind over matter when Mrs. Floyd-Curtis acquired the art of carrying and caressing dogs in public. At the period of her exodus from her first married home in Twenty-sixth Street, East, she had been known to speak of these appendages of fashion as "nasty little wretches that would make a Christian's flesh creep." It was the same kind of moral victory as that attained by her consenting to smoke after-dinner cigarettes. This diversion, introduced by a Russian lady of rank in Washington, had swept like a prairie fire over cer-

tain circles of American society. It was a sight for gods and men to behold the strenuous efforts of respectable home-bred matrons, like our Mrs. Curtis, to assume the enjoying nonchalance of demeanor befitting this Oriental exercise. The poor woman had to struggle with physical pangs, as well as those unwelcome suggestions that would intrude upon her inner consciousness of the impression this exercise would make on the ladies of the church sociable could they behold their former sister in good works.

"There is one serious danger to the success of our plans," resumed Mrs. Clay. "And that is a fear we have always with us. Lily must by no means be allowed to fall in love."

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the

mother. "Why, I don't believe she ever thought of such a thing. I don't believe it's in her."

"So much the better. This being established, I see no room for you to be afraid. Setting out with the aim that Lily is to make a grand match, and keeping it steadily before you, there's no such word as fail."

"You are an angel!" cried Mrs. Curtis. "With you to help me, I feel as if I could bear anything. But you've no idea what I've had to contend with in Mr. Curtis."

"We shall manage that," said the oracle comfortably. The obstacle of a mere commonplace American husband did not seem to her insurmountable.

"You dear, dear thing!" went on Mrs. Curtis, now roused to real grati-

tude. "How, oh, how, can I ever repay you?"

This, being a practical soul, Mrs. Clay was not yet prepared to answer. She contented herself with a rapid and masterly review of schemes for the coming campaign. She had, before long, brought the Curtises home from a successful spring in London, had given them a month at Newport, and was in treaty for a cottage at Lenox a year hence.

"But I tried Lenox two years ago," said Mrs. Curtis, clouding over. "Took the Branwell place, paid six thousand dollars rent, and staid only two months. I don't think the air of Lenox exactly suited my—ah—bronchitis."

"Lenox air does not suit everybody,

I believe," Barbara answered, with a faint, inscrutable smile. (Of course she had heard all about the celebrated failure of the Floyd-Curtises to carry Lenox by assault.) "It may agree better with your—ah—bronchitis another year. My dear Mrs. Floyd-Curtis," she added, sitting up in her chair, attracted by a movement in the group of reclining passengers on the starboard deck, "what in the world can that daughter of yours be doing?"

"What—where?" cried the mother, who found it hard to move as quickly as of yore.

"She is apparently engaged in the effort to take violent possession of a steamer-chair to which some one else lays claim. It is, in fact, what may be called a very pretty scrimmage."



“A scrimmage? Where is Thompson? Lily! I will go to her,” wailed the near-sighted mother, struggling to emerge from her encumbering rug.

“It is over, and Lily is victor of the glen,” remarked Mrs. Clay. “And, as I live, the dispossessed is no other than the Countess of Melrose.”

“The Countess of Melrose?”

“Yes. Didn’t you know she is on board? She is on her way, with her maid, to visit America. There they go, those two dowdy women. Lady Melrose is the dowdier of the two.”

“Lily will be the death of me!” exclaimed Mrs. Curtis, growing redder than was becoming. “Oh, Mr.—ah—Jencks! If you will be so very kind. Just say to my daughter, over there,

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that I will thank her to come to me *at once*."

"And who is Mr. Jencks?" asked Mrs. Clay, with a note of animation in her voice.

"Somebody, we — ah — Lily has picked up — an Englishman. Why, Lily, what does all this mean?"

"Nothing, mamma dear, but that I've twisted the tail of the British lion and made him roar." And Lily, dimpling and debonair, stood at the bar of justice.



## II.

"WHAT did you do to Lady Melrose?" demanded Lily's mother, armed with the utmost dignity at her command, and sitting up so straight that all the little cushions slipped away from her backbone and rushed like an avalanche to the *Etruria's* deck.

"To tell you the truth," said Lily, with delightful nonchal<sup>ance</sup>, "it was what the old thing did to me. I'd picked out a lovely warm spot, and put a chair in it with my rug, and had gone below to get Miss Bridget."

"Miss Bridget?"

"Yes, the Grays' nursery governess. She's so awfully sick and cross, I hadn't

the heart to leave her to herself, so I just tipped a steward, and he was stumbling upstairs, holding on to the old lady, who was behaving rather like a porcupine to him"—A suppressed giggle was heard at this. It came from the strange young man, who had reluctantly lingered near the group, ordered by Lily to stay by her and back her up.

"Go on!" snorted Mrs. Floyd-Curtis.

"Then I saw those two women swooping down upon my chair, and I swooped too, and said they couldn't have it. She said she would, and that she was the Countess of Melrose."

"What more?" said her mother, with a hollow groan.

"There wasn't much more," answered Lily, unabashed. "I suppose

she expected me to curtsy and back off; but when she saw I didn't yield the point, she seized my chair and shook it, and said a few nasty things to me about my impudence. So, to end the matter, I sat down in it myself and looked her in the face as Hail Columbia as you please."

"Lily!" sighed her afflicted parent.

"That scattered her. The maid behaved rather better than the mistress, but not so very much. And there's Miss Bridget in the chair. She says she's feeling better, praise the saints."

It was impossible to resist the girl's audacious drollery. "Poor old Lady Melrose!" said Mrs. Clay, laughing outright. As to the young man looking on, he began to laugh too, but a glance at the majestic scorn in the face

of Lily's mother froze him to good behavior.

"And where, may I ask, was Thompson? Her orders are not to lose you from her sight."

"In her berth, praying to be thrown overboard, mamma; and big stupid James is just as bad. Your maid, Léonie, is holding on by her eyelids, but she'll soon be down. You'll have to let me wait on you, dear, and do your hair, and all."

She leaned over, with an impetuous movement, and kissed her mother on the cheek. One observer thought a caress like that might melt the Sphinx—so ripe, so rare, the lips that dropped it.

And now, lest this story should begin to have the effect of those marches

of Amazons on the stage of comic opera, after which the appearance of a male peasant or two is a genuine relief to the spectator, we will take up the tale of Mr. Jencks—the young man Lily had “picked up.” Only the wrathful preoccupation of Mrs. Floyd-Curtis over the affair with Lady Melrose (what a prize would have been an acquiescent countess to arrive with in New York, to nail at her mast-head, so to speak, and flaunt before reporters and society at large) could have made that lady speak so slightly of an authentic introduction. Mr. Jencks had been presented to the mother and daughter at Liverpool by a well-known American gentleman who had come to see him off. He was certified by this enthusiastic friend to be a fellow of



Oxbridge, a pet disciple of Buxton, and a leading light in the younger world of science, as well as "the best all-around Englishman I know." Mr. Jencks was going out to America to take a professorship that had been offered him in a rising "fresh-water" university. He was a tall, broad-chested man of twenty-eight, very blond, with deep-set blue eyes, and yellow hair already growing thin around the temples and upon the crown. His clothes were well cut, and he wore them with sufficient ease to show that he did not despise the conventionalities of life. His manner was reserved, not shy; and patience and sturdy determination were written in the lines around his mouth. The real reason of Mrs. Floyd-Curtis's coolness

toward this rather prepossessing young man was that, early in their acquaintance, he had had occasion to speak of himself as belonging to the middle class of English society. Mrs. Floyd-Curtis wondered at his want of pride in making this damaging admission, and in her heart determined to drop him as soon as the voyage was over. Not so Miss Lily. At first he had provoked her by a sort of off-hand indifference to her charms. He showed her no gallantries, let her wait upon herself, and had plainly no idea of the immediate yielding of homage to maiden sovereignty with which the American girl, despite her disadvantages of foreign travel, was entirely familiar in the young men of her own nationality. When at sunset they had

leaned together over the rail, the devoted, if seasick, Thompson hovering somewhere in the rear, and the wide horizon had lighted up with tenderest radiance a sea of summer calm, it did not occur to Mr. Ernest Jencks that the occasion called for modification of his usual matter-of-fact demeanor. When Lily with the demurest face in the world, asked him a question about zoölogy, Jencks launched into a dissertation that puzzled at first, then ended by fairly charming her awakening intelligence.

"I didn't think you could make me understand a bit of it," she answered, when he had ceased.

"Considering I am going to make my bread and butter by an appeal to concrete ignorance—" he observed.

"Thank you," interrupted Lily. "That's very gracefully put. I suppose it's because you are an all-around Englishman, isn't it? I don't know, on the whole, but what I prefer a one-sided Yankee."

"I suppose I'm not very mannerly," Jencks said, the blood coming into his face a little. "To tell you the truth, I am no great hand at conversation with young ladies."

"No, really?" cried the unsparing Lily. "Is this one of those 'germs of truth hidden under a mountain of tradition' you told me of?"

"I mean I have hardly had time to cultivate drawing-room graces," he went on sturdily. "My sisters are about the only girls I know well, and they have never been in society. The

life you lead is as much like theirs as an exotic orchid resembles a bit of mountain heather."

"If you had seen me at lunch to-day you wouldn't have said I am an air-plant," laughed Lily. "Another time I shall ask you to tell me more about those bits of heather. Now I am going below, to see if poor mamma needs anything. They say we are to have a taste of rough weather, and I begin to feel an icy nip in the air."

"I am prepared for anything after my voyage last January, when I came over to prospect about settling in America. That was a gale! Our ship pitched into it headlong directly after we left Queenstown. Thermometer below eighteen; the masts and rigging looking like blown glass with icicles;

and hail, snow, and electricity all in the same day."

"It was a western welcome, the kind we reserve for English professors of biology," the girl said as she quitted him.

The weather had changed suddenly from good to bad, and thereafter the North Atlantic disgraced itself by pranks of the most exasperating nature. The great pitching hotel, with its myriad slaves of the lamp ready to do the bidding of the modern Aladdin and his wife, became a minor purgatory. The well people resented the intolerable nuisance of the sick, and the sick cherished an enduring grievance against the insulting ones who kept their balance. The tenderest ties of humanity were strained almost to

bursting. Husbands, models on land, who in this exigency of ailing wives and nurses found themselves obliged to wash, dress, and entertain their offspring, were tempted to renounce in a lump the joys of matrimony. Wives, elsewhere as coquettish as they were fond, made scarecrows of themselves and relapsed into mere complaining bundles of old clothes. People who affected any pretense at dressing as in ordinary days did so in a series of mad plunges, going headlong into their garments as an acrobat goes through a paper hoop. Moodiness, selfishness, savageness, all those ugly traits of human nature in fair weather tucked out of sight, were brought from their places of concealment and wrapped around their victims like a pall.

In this crisis, to the survivors who did not drink, or smoke, or gamble twelve hours out of the twenty-four, the only bearable place of resort was, of course, the deck. Sometimes, when rain was drizzling on an angry rolling sea, Lily Curtis, cased all in water-proofs that clung like the plumage of a duck, ventured out, to the admiration of beholders. Her bright face, with the color coming into it in flashes like northern lights, was next best to a ray of sunshine, people said. And her spirits were unending. The more glum and hateful other passengers became, the more fun and frolic took possession of her soul. Jencks, who was oftener her partner than any one else, thought she was like Undine, and expected to see her dissolve and recede



under one of the big foam fountains in their wake. She amused him, she roused him, the more so when experience settled his first doubt as to whether such exuberance of spirits could be natural in a person able to form her own opinion, and both worldly-wise and clear-headed to a remarkable degree. Thanks to the detestable weather, there never was, and never would be in either of their lives, such an opportunity for two young people to enter into sudden intimacy. Certainly poor Mrs. Floyd-Curtis must have been abandoned to her misery, or she would have guarded against these alarming long talks, where the only chaperons were a sailor or so, distinctly unimpressed by the fact that one of the water-proof specters was a mem-

ber of the British middle class. What most astonished the grave young professor was when he found himself babbling like a school-girl about his own affairs.

"Tell me about your home, your people," Lily had said, when, heaped up with rugs in a comparatively sheltered nook, they defied a whistling northwester.

"We are the most unimportant family in the Kingdom," he answered, "if you consider that I am the eldest hope ; that there are thirteen children ; that my people could just scrape together funds enough to take me through the university ; and that all the rest have had to scramble along on what was left."

"Goodness !" exclaimed, or rather

shrieked, Lily, above the commotion of the elements. (The pitch of their conversation was like that at a New York "tea.") "And ten of them are boys?"

"Yes. One of my sisters," responded the sonorous tones of Jencks, "is a teacher in a girls' college."

"A teacher? And you are one, too? It never occurred to me that I could sit down in cold blood, on the *Etruria*, and talk with a teacher. I've always thought of them, you know, as persons one is glad to get away from, like the dentist when you have done with him."

"It will, fortunately, not be long before you have the opportunity," said Jencks huffily, as he rose up from his chair.

"Sit down, please. If you don't

keep your feet on my chair I shall be over in the lee-scuppers, or whatever the things are. I can't help thinking **what** an amiable family yours must be if they are all like you. Fancy thirteen of you, all together, firing up like that! Now tell me about the other girls. I'm sorry I compared you with the dentist."

Jencks drew a long breath, and recovered himself.

"My second sister is at home, helping my mother, who, by the way, is a wonderful little woman for fifty-odd, and looks younger than her eldest girl. The third, Carrie, threatens to study medicine. Our home is a rambling old place, on the outskirts of a country town, where my father has spent his life as a hard-working doctor. All of

the boys have fads, and are dreadfully self-willed. Some of us are to be found in every quarter of the globe. Aleck, the youngest, who is fourteen, and Carrie, both expect to come out to me in America when I can make a place for them."

"In Illyria, Michigan?" Lily asked. "Ever since you told me you are going to settle there I have been trying to bring my geographical knowledge to bear on it, but with no success. I give Illyria up. It's too far west. I can't imagine it."

"Of course you give it up. Such a dull little town, with a newly started university as its central point, has no right to expect recognition at your hands. Only, if a flood or a blizzard should happen to sweep me out of time,

please read about it in the newspaper, and say, 'Dear me ! I remember him perfectly. He was a passenger with us in the *Etruria*.' "

"Nonsense ! Tell me more about your home."

"There is absolutely nothing that would interest you. All the excitement of my life has come from accomplished work. When other men of my contemporaries have been enjoying themselves in a thousand ways I've been plodding. My people, as I told you, are workers too, and probably always will be."

"You have never had *any* pleasures?" she said, with sudden gentleness.

"Bless you, yes ! All that was good for me. A walking tour, now and

again, in England or Wales or Switzerland, and a trip to Paris and Edinburgh, where I was sent on special missions. I suppose you can't understand pleasure that does not spring from the expenditure of unlimited dollars."

"That is very rude, and far from correct. Long ago, when I was a little girl, we were quite poor, and our home was a very plain one. I believe before my mother was married hers was even plainer. My father goes down town to his work every day now, just as he did before my mother inherited her fortune. I suppose it's in the blood, but I'll have to tell the truth: none of those idle men who dress themselves three times a day like women, and try to kill time, interest me in the least. I have the most plebeian taste for workers."

“Wait till you become a great lady on your own account and you’ll have work enough to suit you. Do you think, having eyes, I see not for what they destine you? And that, but for the accident of all your guardians being seasick, you’d no more be allowed to give so much of your society to a penniless brain-worker than you would to that sailor yonder with the rope?”

What was this note of feeling in his tone? Lily stole a glance at him, and felt a little scared.

“Well, I like the box-seat of a four-in-hand,” she said; “and a big steam yacht is an earthly paradise. Perhaps I wasn’t quite sincere when I said I never fancied any of the idlers. There is one exception.”

“Ah, there is one exception?”



grumbled Mr. Jencks in his yellow mustache.

"Yes. This is the hour for tender confidences. I enjoy roaring out my secrets. It was the young guardsman I met at the Prince's breakfast. He was as handsome as a picture, and so gay and good-natured."

"Good-natured, I dare say, with all the women flattering him."

"That they did flatter him! We all did. We hung upon his words. He looked as if when we had done admiring him he would go back into a glass case. He told me about his other clothes, and gave me the gardenia from his buttonhole. Unfortunately, mamma took me away from Homburg the next day. Since then I can only dream of him."

"I say, what a quiz you are!" said Mr. Jencks.

That afternoon she made him talk again of his household. Witched from him by her eyes of hazel were the simple annals of his life. His hopes, his ambitions, all but his successes, were unrolled as if upon a scroll. It did not occur to him to tell her about the monograph that had set all London talking.

"I don't know why it pleases me so much to hear these things," she said naïvely. "Probably because it is so different from anything I have met. To have you describe the country town, and your father in the gig, and the boys, and Carrie, is like one of those lovely stories by Mrs. Ewing or 'Miss Toosey.'"

“At least I’ve told you all there is. I give you three days from the moment of landing in New York to forget it. Oh, I shant growl about it if you do. I know what to expect. Certainly you may judge what a humdrum lot we are, and how utterly beyond the range of a fashionable young lady like yourself, and repent, at your leisure, of an even passing interest in the house of Jencks.”

A passing interest? For the first time in Lily’s maiden life she felt it difficult to raise her eyes to meet those of a man. A queer, incomprehensible, but not unpleasant thrill ran through her veins. And then, to her dismay, these phenomena of nature were completed by the rising of a blush. Every young woman knows what a vile, un-

welcome, overmastering thing a blush is when it "gives away" a feeling. The professor saw, wondered, and to the shame of his eight-and-twenty years, of his Oxbridge fellowship, of his life vowed to science, Mr. Ernest Jencks blushed too.

Lily was the first to pull herself together.

"I forgot to tell you what I heard last night in the room next to mine," she began, in her old mischievous way. "They are a couple returning from their bridal tour. She said: 'Darling, I can't rest at all. I believe there are crumbs of biscuits in my berth.' He said: 'Try to sleep, darling. It must be imagination. I am quite comfortable here.' Presently she moaned: 'Oh! I wish I had never left my

mother. I am so perfectly sure there are crumbs.' Then there was a deep groan from the upper berth. 'Hang it all, Maud! if you get me down from here there's no telling when I'll get to sleep again.' Maud burst into sobs, and I got up and banged my door. There was a sudden awful hush."

Smoking a pipe to himself, as he strode up and down the deck at night-fall, Jencks was a prey to the most distracting reflections. If I were to write several pages in elaborating them for the benefit of my readers, it would be only to arrive at an inevitable and lame conclusion—the poor young man had fallen head over ears in love. His acceptance of this fact as definite had the disastrous result of infuriating him. Softer suggestions, imaginings

sweeter than honey of Hymettus, were swept away in a torrent of self-contempt. This laughing witch with the bronze-red hair, the red-and-white complexion, the look of vigorous health, the outspoken fearlessness of character, whom at first he had looked on merely in the light of a pleasing variety upon the tedium of the voyage—how had she come to grapple his heart with cables stronger than those that beneath the Atlantic surge link two continents together? Beside these bonds all others were as threads of cotton; and, as far as he could see, would always be so. That was the rub! Jencks knew his own tenacity of purpose. He had never given up the thing he set his mind to do. He was a man in his maturity, no infant crying

for the moon. This was the first passion of his life. And the object of it was an American heiress, hawked by the newspapers as one of the best prizes in the matrimonial market, and surrounded by a body-guard of ambitious friends bent upon lifting her into high place in the world's society !

Jencks was dripping with wet, tired with tramping, when he turned in to go below. In passing the smoking-room he was hailed by an acquaintance, a good-natured clubman of New York, who besought him to join in a night-cap of "hot Scotch." To this allurements he could but yield, and, lighting another pipe of tobacco, sat down in not particularly jovial spirits.

"A devilish dull voyage, this," remarked Mr. Banting, known to his

friends as Tommy. He was rather stout, but active on his feet, and was renowned as a conductor of cotillons. "I don't know that I ever made a dollar crossing. The only woman on board who could help to pass away the time is Mrs. Bertie Clay, and she's taken this trip to have tonsillitis in, confound it! By the way, I see you've hit it off with the Floyd-Curtis girl. I never could myself, but I've kept in with the mother. They say they've engaged the Vanderwinker's *chef*."

Jencks kept his mouth as close shut as a clam, but Tommy liked to do the talking.

"Though she's not my sort," went on Mr. Banting, "I'm bound to say I think the girl will win. There are several fellows, married and single,



ready to 'fasten on,' and send her stock up in the market. Of course, though, the old woman will want to marry her to a title. It's getting worse than ever in our country. That list the *Tribune* published the other day, of American women entitled to a place in the nobility of Europe, has turned the heads of half our feminines. If the true story of some of those matches had been printed, in sympathetic ink, you know,—dodge of the nihilists,—between the lines, I don't think it would have made the mothers grin. Take Mrs. Bertie Clay, for one. Why, that little woman has been through scenes—Clay's off somewhere with the wife of a fellow-officer. He daren't show his face in England since he was kicked out of his club for cheat-

ing. Look at the Princess Puzzuoli,—Anita Lovering that was,—a sweet, pretty girl as ever I saw when she came out ten years ago. I saw her in Paris this summer, looking like a hag—the wrinkles, and so on, filled with paint and powder. She's perfectly lifeless, and no wonder. When the prince had spent the money she brought him he borrowed hers, and tried to drain her father, and at last beat her and locked her in her bedroom closet. Of course they do not live together now. Her father keeps her apartment in Paris on condition that she refuses to receive the prince, and the prince has an allowance to keep away. Poor girl!—she says she will never come home again; and I don't blame her."

Mr. Banting took a sip of hot Scotch to hide his feelings. It was well known he had been once a suitor for Miss Lovering's hand.

"Those are but two of a dozen I could name. And yet the title hunt goes on with undiminished zeal. Every little sprig of nobility they send over to us from the other side is made much of in New York, and then passed along through the other cities. Blame it, those fellows walk on flowers! The big fish take what liberties they please, and the little ones swim after. Now isn't it an infernal shame, you know?"

"I don't know. I'm not by way of bothering about such matters," Jencks answered coldly.

"Eh? I understand. Science and

that sort of thing is your lay-out. My dear fellow, you may congratulate yourself. You are preserved from the snares of the mammas. A commoner is absolutely safe. If you'll excuse it, American girls don't want 'em. Our girls have got uncommonly long heads. They see that they're much better off married in their own country unless marriage means the top of the heap in yours. The stories that come to us of the few girls who have got husbands not in the first-chop society in England are pretty doleful. To be at the tail-end never suited a young woman with the habits and expectations of a New York belle. Boston, perhaps, wouldn't mind it, particularly if there were literature or science thrown in. I'm not sure about Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Some time, when I have leisure, I mean to go to Philadelphia, and then I can find out. But I'm certain, absolutely so, about New Yorkers."

Launched in his favorite subject, Tommy was good to prattle till forcibly withdrawn from it. Jencks puffed grimly away at his pipe.

"You see I'm paying you the compliment to consider you out of the running," resumed Mr. Banting. "It's plain to see you've got a soul above such trivialities. Barker told me what a deuce of a swell you are in lectures about that—er—ology of yours, you know. But for us everyday Americans, who believe in our women, and let ourselves be badgered and bullied by them till we can't rest, this matter's getting to be no joke. What man

wants to work his head off to lay up money, and then see a fool and profligate walk away with it and his daughter in the bargain, so that his grandchildren may have handles to their names and learn to despise America?"

"Since you ask me," remarked Mr. Jencks, "I'm free to say I have heard of several who have not only submitted to, but courted, the imposition."

"Hum!" answered Tommy Banting. "There's no denying a stone wall when you come a cropper over it. But look at this, will you?" He took out of his pocket-book a cutting from the advertising column of a German newspaper. "Here's a precious bit of California enterprise, and I'm told it's started in New York."

Listlessly the other took the slip into

his hand and read what, in translation, follows :

Gentlemen of position, noblemen, cavaliers, and officers of high standing (military or civil), who wish to marry very rich American ladies, may put themselves in communication with the undersigned. Ladies with property to \$20,000,000 are on our list. The greatest secrecy guaranteed. Photographs and detailed reports will be furnished. Address The International Bureau of Private Transactions, San Francisco, California, America.

"What do you think of that?" fumed Banting.

"Such beastly rot!" Jencks answered. "It's a trap for the needy, don't you see? I'm like the boy whose compassion was aroused for the little lion in the corner of the den who didn't seem likely to get his share of martyr. My sympathies are all for the princes, counts, and barons who may have put their advance fees into letters to The

International Bureau of Private Transactions. No doubt the whole thing's a newspaper canard."

"Plenty of people will believe in it. It will add one more to the list of stories that cheapen American girls in European eyes. It'll bring a bigger rush than ever of those titled sharks into American waters. And we'll continue to throw overboard to them our daintiest bait, of course. That delectable business shows no sign of dying out among us. We give our money, take their titles, and touch our caps as your railway porters do when you tip 'em half-a-crown."

"Good God, man!" Jencks said, bringing his fist upon the table in a transport of impatience. "Whose fault is it, if in a country like yours, capable



of any attainment of moral grandeur as an example among nations, your men and women should bring up their children by no higher standard than is shown by your own admission? There's some excuse for the petty worshipers of caste with us. To get it out of them, they'd have to be boiled down and skimmed and run into a new mold. But you, you Americans, who are born socially to the freedom of the wild horse of the Pampas; who, by the force of your own individuality, can set the mark you desire to leave upon your community; who are not bound and swaddled and smothered by hereditary awe for class and title—why aren't you satisfied? It seems to me, from what I can pick up, yours in New York is the most pretentious, the most

artificial, society in all your broad land. By George ! I wonder what that old Malay, Carlyle, would have done if he'd been turned loose to run amuck through your ranks—the men who make, by election, fops and spendthrifts of their sons ; who submit their daughters and their ducats to such rascals as we've seen carry off your women ; the mothers breaking the bonds of inherited Puritanism, and striving to be second-rate imitations of the fast lot abroad ! .It makes my blood boil to hear such ways called 'English' ; I'd like to sound a trumpet and proclaim a protest in the name of a thousand homes of England."

"Great Scott !" remarked Mr. Banting, to whom this tirade gave welcome entertainment. "Seems to me,

though, that we agree about the main point. But I say, old fellow, New York is not America, and there's a queer thing you have to be behind the curtain to find out. If we like to try on your aristocracy's old clothes, it's no sign they always fit. Some of the people, I know, that make the best showing in public of their borrowed plumage, relapse, when they're alone, into the old homespun ways of loving each other and their kids, giving to charities, and so on. I think they get a little tired of aping."

"So does the clown when he washes his face and sits down to beer and cheese," Jencks answered. "Ah, well! you Americans are nothing if not experimental. You're all trying to condense a century of progress into

your lifetime. I beg your pardon if I've been a nuisance, and I'll say good-night."

Not exactly exhilarated by this interview, he sought rest in his berth, with but indifferent success. The increased pitching of the ship showed they were in the teeth of a gale. On all sides arose lamentations from those whose millions could not purchase them a moment's surcease from motion. If Neptune, who, as the ancients thought, has power by striking his trident on the sea to make an island rise from it, would only exert himself to establish a stopping-place in mid-Atlantic, there would be fewer new arrivals made on either continent.

When the man who shared Jencks's room began to groan aloud, that sym-

pathetic personage determined, after the manner of his sex, to leave the sufferer to his fate. Standing again on deck, he drank in the salt with a berserker's delight. He felt as if he would have liked now to be a Viking sailing his own craft, holding hard the tiller, and chasing the witch-whale through these great rolling mountains and under this blue-black sky. It was no longer a simple west wind that blew their good vessel back, but a furious blast, coming from every quarter by turns. Spray drenched the decks, and the noise of wind and waves was deafening. Through all, the faithful screw kept up its weary grinding, and the great ship, with her living freight, held her unerring course.

During the twenty-four hours that

followed there was little rest for any soul on board. On the morning of the second day Jencks saw a familiar figure come out of a cabin-door and stand swaying to survey the waste of angry waters.

"Don't order me in, please!" she cried, palpably radiant at sight of him. "It's only to get a breath of air into my lungs."

"Take my arm, then. I'll steady you," he replied, with an answering signal of delight.

It was foolish, it was imprudent—but so young people are constructed. Lily had made up her mind to put Jencks out of it. Jencks, like Lars Porsena of Clusium, by the nine gods he swore, not to let this American girl make a fool of him. The relief of see-

ing a big, strong, well person of the protecting sex, clad in a storm-defying ulster and cap, hold out his arm to her, was by Lily not to be resisted. With an enchanting smile, she laid her arm in his. The wind hustled around them, and for solitude they might as well have been on the Peak of Teneriffe. Speech in that warfare of elements was impossible. She was so near that the lovely peach-bloom of her cheek almost grazed the unsympathetic frieze of the collar of his ulster. And there the two stood, with beating hearts, till a wave bigger than all the rest came pounding upon the deck and drenched them both. Added to this injury, a tarpaulined being, with a hoarse and resentful voice, allowed them to overhear some pointed remarks about the

presence of ladies on deck at such a time. Jencks laughed rather inanely as he tipped the tarpaulined gentleman, for what service he did not clearly know. Lily had vanished, blushing vividly.

In that one brief, unexpected moment had been worked the old-new miracle. Without a word passing between them, each knew what the other's heart would hide. Whatever of disappointment, dolor, listlessness of middle age, survival of young beliefs, time might hold in store, they had tasted the supreme delight.





### III.

IT was not until Mr. Ernest Jencks, late passenger on the steamship *Etruria*, and future professor of biology in Illyria University, Michigan, found himself and his luggage shut up in a dingy cab of the "night-hawk" pattern, and oscillating violently toward the Brevoort House over pavements unutterably bad, that the conviction dawned on him he had been tricked by fate. Verily, in the words of his prophet Carlyle, might have been said to him, "The understanding is indeed thy window—too clear thou canst not make it; but fantasy is thine eye, with its color-giving

retina." Imagination had him in her grip. Since the pantomimic but expressive interview with the goddess of his dreams on shipboard he had actually not had speech with her alone. With returning sunshine, dry decks, good appetites, and hopes of land, the ship's passengers had suddenly blossomed out into a host of chirping, joking folk, full of the affairs of the world that did not interest him and that subtly divided him from Lily.

Among the first to emerge from seclusion was Lily's mother. Trig, alert, stylish, conscious of a becoming hat, and sustained by stays that took ten years from her age, Mrs. Floyd-Curtis was herself again. At her beck were attendants aggressively correct and solemn. Surrounding the chairs

of mother and daughter was a throng of gossipers. And if chance offered him a loophole, by seeing Lily set out for a walk, she was at once followed and entwined by Mrs. Clay. To hang around with the crowd in the hope of receiving the sixteenth of a smile or the thirty-second part of an opinion as to Lili Lehmann's voice did not allure him irresistibly. The whole complexion of things between them had been altered by fine weather. He was almost tempted to find his divinity sometimes pert, as he thought her mother vulgar. A light frost, in fact, had fallen upon his blooming rose-bush. And then a great event had taken place, reconciling Mrs. Floyd-Curtis to head winds and expanding her soul in pious recognition of the

blessings sometimes concealed by frowns of Providence. Lady Melrose, widow of the late earl and mother of the present unmarried owner of the title, the irate dowager on her travels whom Miss Lily had contrived to affront so grievously at the outset of their voyage, had, like her fellow-travelers, been laid low by seasickness. She was a neighbor of Mrs. Floyd-Curtis in the locality of her stateroom, and it would have been a stony-hearted peeress who could have refused the patient daily offerings of homage—*pâté* sandwiches, fruit, champagne, and what not—that found their way to the reviving sufferer. And thus, by a process slow, but sure as the growth of pearls within the shell, America appeased the mother country. When the

dowager appeared on deck, giving to view high aquiline features, a suffused complexion, and the expression of a bird about to pounce, her thin form encased in a black alpaca dust-cloak, and a faded blue hood trimmed with seal upon her head, it was leaning on the arm of Mrs. Floyd-Curtis's own Jeames, to take her place amid the downiest of Mrs. Floyd-Curtis's own cushions.

How Mrs. Clay admired her co-worker in diplomatic paths ; how Lily was made to nibble, with rosy lips and contradicting eyes, at a bit of humble-pie ; how Mrs. Floyd-Curtis sat by serene, and kept the situation well in hand—are victories to be sung in strains heroic, not said in lowly prose.

Had our worthy Jencks been a little

less of a dreamer, and a little better versed in worldly ways, he had surely seen that this circumstance put the finishing touch to his hopes of favor from Lily's mother. Had there been nothing else, how could Mrs. Floyd-Curtis have ventured to perform the rites of introduction between an Englishman of middle class and an Englishwoman of high rank on a ship flying British colors? This is a question for the manuals on etiquette to decide. The vastness of the subject inclines me to waive trouble by letting Mrs. Floyd-Curtis have her way.

Thus matters had continued until the *Etruria* touched her pier. Then a wild throb of rebellion against parting with his love without another word of confidence assailed the breast of

Ernest Jencks. He could have seized her and jumped overboard had he dared believe she returned his passion. But of opportunity for this sort of medieval *coup-de-main* none offered. Lily had receded as America drew near. He almost fancied she had intention in her avoidance of his presence. In the confusion of going ashore, when he was standing alone and savage, debating what next to do, Jencks felt a touch like velvet on his arm. He turned around, saw Lily with her maid, and in the near distance Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, beckoning.

"It was to ask if I may keep your 'Letters to Dead Authors,'" Lily said; "I can send it to you by mail."

He had forgotten the book, but his heart exhaled in blessing Andrew



Lang. In his joy at recognizing a bond between them, however slight, poor Jencks lost his head, and blurted out :

“Don’t send it back. Or, if you must, keep it till you want—till you’ve need of me—you might, you know—then send it, and I will come.”

“All the way from Illyria?” she said, with her old merry smile at his extravagance of promise.

“From the world’s end,” he whispered hotly, and their hands met ; then Mrs. Floyd-Curtis bore down upon the group and hustled them apart.

It was a moment of some anxiety for Lily’s mother. There was on board a new prima donna, and the reporters had come down in full force to be told

of her gladness to greet America. It was also known that the heroine of the Prince's breakfast was returning by this ship, and as paragraphs were bound to reach next morning's newspapers it was naturally desirable that they should be discreetly framed. When, therefore, a good-looking young gentleman doffed his hat to Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, and offered her his card containing in one corner certain magic syllables to show what organ of public opinion he embodied, the clever lady actually turned red. But soon recovering herself, she withdrew a little from the crowd, and discoursed to her questioner in gracious whispers.

Mr. Thomas Banting, who, barring a rather cherubic look, could in no

sense be said to suggest a messenger of Cupid, found Jencks at his hotel some days after landing. The Englishman, who had determined to spend a fortnight in New York before banishment to Illyrian wilds, seemed to the genial New Yorker to be in an impracticable mood, and, reversing Brown-ing's words, was "all prickles, no petals." He let himself be carried off, however; was put up at a couple of clubs, and dined at Delmonico's, where they saw a curious gathering of sun-burned, hilarious people in half-traveling costume, declared by Mr. Banting to be the elect of society returned from mountain, moor, and sea, and in the act of opening their town houses for the season. Jencks looked in vain for the fragility he had been led to believe

in as typical of American women. The men, too, were brown and hearty, and much of the talk was about sport, horses, dogs, and yachting, although, where the ladies had no part in conversation, Wall Street and the familiar names in finance were often heard. The evening wound up pleasantly at a neighboring theater, where they enjoyed as much as was possible of a charming actress over the monstrous bonnets of the women occupying seats in the parquette. Coming out of the play-house, the two men stood for a moment to light their cigars beneath the electric light of the entrance. Jencks wondered at the incongruity of an audience so richly attired struggling for places in a Broadway car. Pell-mell they rushed for the seats, and

when these were filled surged into the narrow aisle, packed in a swaying mass. Women, with costly furs, diamonds, and hothouse violets, clinging to the straps, were nudged and jostled by any unsavory stranger who had paid his five cents for a "ride." And still the insatiable car stood still and submitted to new incursions. More ladies, laughing and breathless, got in, or rather on to the platform at the rear. These the conductor of the car, a smiling Irishman in a greasy uniform and with extremely dirty hands, patted upon the back, adjuring them to "Step up lively, now." When at last neither inside nor out could by any pretense be made to receive another martyr, the bell rang, the straining horses started, and a new car came

into place, to see the experiment repeated.

“By the way, this is Friday,” said Banting, as they exchanged good-nights. “Why not run out with me to-morrow to Tupelo, and stop over till Monday? It’s a place you ought to see. And I shouldn’t wonder if you find some one there you know. I know the Floyd-Curtises are there. They’ve been buying land, I’m told.”

Jencks hesitated, and was lost.

Next day Banting found him walking up and down in the ferry-house at the foot of West Twenty-third Street, and thought the air of New York must agree with the new-comer, so bright, so eager, was the young man’s face, so quick his step. Presently a huge double-ended boat came into the slip,

gates were opened, and a crowd of people emerged, rushing as if to see a fire, carrying with it women, babies, and other impedimenta, to be succeeded by a returning wave of similar humanity, who, filling the cabins, settled placidly into the seats. When the everyday people were established it was the turn of a few whose luggage was marked "Tupelo Park" to go on board. Some sat in their cabs or broughams, with glasses down, and with long-coated footmen waiting close at hand. Others went out on the forward deck, and stood huddled in little isolated groups. Almost all refused to see their fellow-passengers. They were really delightfully exclusive. And their accent was for the most part so strongly English, their phraseology so

much what Jencks had left behind, that but for an occasional relapse into the American vernacular, a word promptly repronounced in English, you might have believed them to be one of Thackeray's bands of British aristocrats compelled to cross the Channel in company with tourists of their own nation, but of baser clay.

The glorious wide river swelled into a mimic sea. The far shore was dyed with autumn tints. A wind blew out of the west so fresh and free as to make the blood tingle with delight. In this sparkling atmosphere the Hudson was instinct with life. As the cumbersome boat plowed heavily in the direction of New Jersey she was apparently compelled to thread her way among schooners, sloops, lumber-barges, tugs,



and rowboats that impeded her course. Other huge ferry-boats crossed and recrossed the stream. An ocean steamer came in, another sailed, the decks thronged with passengers. It seemed like a game of hit-or-miss, as the various craft glided before and behind theirs, amid the clang of bells and raucous cries of steam whistles. For miles along each shore the horizon line was etched with the masts of ships.

Most striking to the eye familiar with the atmospheric density of a London firmament was the stainless blue of the sky serving as umbrella to New York, whose purity the smoke of thousands of chimneys did not succeed in smirching. In the slanting rays of an afternoon sun, housetops, spires,

towering buildings, and meaner suburbs were seen under a beautifying veil of golden tissue.

In the drawing-room car, where the Tupelo party were presently assembled, Jencks found himself, willy-nilly, gathered up by Banting and presented to some of the passengers who had by that time relaxed into a relieved intercommunication of which the perspective showed no bar. By all of them he had the satisfaction to be received civilly, by some with cordiality. A new Englishman has the odds all in his favor. Banting, a good-natured mortal, and sketchy in his style, had told his friends that Professor Jencks was the most famous scientist of Oxbridge, and that Barker said he might probably be intending to write a book about the

States. Barker had said nothing of the kind. It was a passenger on the *Etruria* who hazarded this observation, and Banting interwove it with his own ideas of the reality. The consequence was that Jencks's reputation, immediately after he set foot on American soil, began to grow at the rate of Chicago or Seattle.

In the talk of the circle of which Mr. Jencks was now privileged to be a member he thought he had never heard a more nimble interchange of merry nothings. The manner of it was rather French than English, though the low voices and distinct enunciation, here more the rule than the exception, suggested a lesson acquired in England and practiced with painstaking. Following his experience with some other

Americans in public vehicles, the present one "like a poultice came, to heal the blows of sound."

It was evident that the men were mostly content to let their womankind serve as their representatives in active speech. Some of them, coming directly from down-town offices to join their families at the ferry, opened the large sheets of evening newspapers and were lost behind them at the starting of the train. Now and again such a student of current history might be observed to grind his teeth and crumple his journal, or to get up and retire precipitately into the smokers' car. He was apt to be a distinguished citizen whose name was familiar to the public, unable yet to derive entertainment from some horribly personal and abusive paragraph

concerning his private character, or a brief biography of his wife or daughter accompanied with ghastly process blocks of these ladies in *costume de bal*.

To Jencks's particular lot fell a voluble couple, mother and daughter, going up for what apparently was an oft-repeated holiday at Tupelo, and prepared to enlighten him on all points connected with the gossip of the place.

Under circumstances like these he naturally heard the name of his fair one early brought up for comment. The young lady, a "bud" of the preceding year, beset him to know what he thought of the eyes, nose, mouth, taste in dress, intelligence, and temper of Miss Floyd-Curtis. The poor girl was, in fact, thoroughly raked over the

coals of criticism. His interlocutor, who, he justly thought, was pretty enough on her own account to have left room in the world for Lily, did not rest till she had despoiled the newer beauty of every claim to admiration. And then he observed her bestow a covert but satisfying glance at a certain strip of mirror let into the opposite wall of the Pullman.

Mr. Jencks learned also that not only were the Floyd-Curtises installed at the club house as recent purchasers of land and prospective house-owners, entitled now to the privileges of membership, but that they had with them as their guests Mrs. Bertie Clay and the Countess of Melrose. These ladies were to be crown and summit of the evening's expected meeting of

club people and cottagers in the ball-room of the club house.

Less than an hour and a half of journeying over emerald lowlands into a beautiful hill country, all garlanded with autumn leaves, brought the party to their destined stopping-place. Behind the station were drawn up an array of dog-carts, village carts, wago-nettes, and other shining vehicles, with grooms, horses, and harness in correctest style. To these severally resorted the people who owned them as well as the luxurious cottages scattered about the Park. Jencks, with his friend and others bound directly to the club, took possession knee to knee of a trig omnibus, and were before long passing under a stone archway marking the confines of the

Park. Here, between the rows of chattering people, Jencks again enjoyed hearing the name of Miss Floyd-Curtis tossed like a shuttlecock. He was inclined to think that the importance to the social community of a new belle was second only to that of a presidential candidate to the community at large; and, this being the year of a presidential election, he had already found opportunity for observation on that subject. That conjecture had begun to reckon up the available and impecunious members of the British peerage for Lily's benefit, he was made almost painfully aware.

It was otherwise a pleasant drive enough, through a wilderness that had been made to blossom into something akin to the perfection of English land-



scape gardening. The winding roads were paved and drained and provided with lamps for gas, but overhead grew trees of the deep woods, and at every turn some boulder bedded in moss and greenery, some bank of yellowing bracken, some glimpse of lake and distant hilltop, showed that nature had not been despoiled of her fondest coqueties. In the dewy depths of leafage glorious in rainbow color there were still notes of song-birds tarrying upon their southward way, while squirrels stored their nuts in full sight of the passer-by. Viewed in that atmospheric brilliancy of tone peculiar to our hill country at this season of the year, a little effort of the imagination and one might revive the primeval stretches of woodlands in which the

genius of Cooper framed some of his "Leather-stocking Tales."

The "bus," skirting the lake, drew up finally before a long, picturesque, brown house, with wings and attendant cottages clustered beneath a grove of glorious oak trees. Lackeys in waiting helped travelers to alight, and ushered them into a deep hall, filled with the furnishings of home-like comfort, and softly luminous with lamps and a fire of logs, kindled in a chimney-place of cavernous proportions. Scattered over the great table facing the fire were journals and magazines of England and America, those illusive piles that light the unaccustomed eye with rapture, and to the habitual reader of many periodicals convey satiety with the mere glancing at the

covers. Surrounding this table, seated in easy-chairs or standing, were groups of men and women, most of them attired as if just come in from walk, or drive, or ride, or sail. It was the pleasant hour when cups clink and kettles puff their steam, when whitest fingers twinkle over sugar-tongs, dally with cream-jugs, and make votive offerings of too often atrocious draughts of tea. In an adjoining drawing-room a table was spread offering full material for the exercise of this fashionable pastime. Elsewhere was heard the soft click of billiard balls, and to the men who so desired it there was more than one open door of escape from the society of their best and dearest. But for the registry desk, hidden from sight by the abutment of the chimney,

where stood an official prepared to testify on all points connected with trains, telegrams, conveyances, drives, keys, location of rooms, probabilities of weather, and the correct time of day, it was like the country house of some self-effacing host.

Jencks was a little bewildered by the brilliant gayety of the guests, the already established among them greeting the newcomers with effusive welcome. He would have missed the reserve, the low-toned talk, of a similar gathering in England had he been an adept in the country houses of his own native land. But it was charming enough to dispense with criticism as he stood by the hall fire looking curiously on at the kaleidoscopic picture. In none of the passing figures did he dis-

cern the one now become of absorbing interest to his thoughts. As the people were thinning out to go to their rooms the hall door opened, and, in a waft of cooling air, fragrant with odors of the autumn wood, came to him the apparition of Lily Curtis. She was one of a driving party just arrived, and on entering the warm hall she hastened to loosen and throw aside the Connemara cloak of glowing crimson, with some sort of high collar of brown fur and intricate clasps of beaten silver, that he remembered seeing on ship-board. That the young man nearest her received this cloak upon his arm as if it had been royalty's, Jencks noted with jealous eyes. Then a species of giddiness came into his calm brain, for Lily, looking over at the fire, saw him

in turn. She was clad all in white woolen stuff made sailor-wise, and she wore upon her ruddy locks a little sailor hat. Everything recalled to him their voyage and his enchantment. A moment and she had crossed the hall and was holding out her hand to him, a joy there was no mistaking in her eyes.

“Why, Mr. Jencks!” she exclaimed.

“Oh, how d’ye do—I’m here with Banting,”

It is only in books that people taken by surprise adjure each other in polished phraseology.

While dressing for dinner a sense of the grotesqueness of his present attitude disturbed the young professor. He was obviously a fish out of water. He felt tempted to pack his portman-

teau and go back to town by the night train. He tried to persuade himself that the only reason for not doing so was that it would seem so very rude to Banting.

Banting and he had a little table for two in the great glass-covered veranda overlooking the lake, where everybody likes to dine. Banting had cunningly selected their location in order to give his friend a full view of the pretty scene.

There were many tables, some large, some small, the diners numbering about one hundred and fifty when reinforced by parties from the cottages, who came in for the dance that was to follow. In their immediate vicinity a table with many roses and silver candelabra was prepared for an especial

party not yet arrived. Presently Jencks had the pleasing pain of seeing six couples come down the room, among them his sweetheart and the man who had held her cloak, and take their places at this table next to him. Without doing more than to glance over the rim of his glass of Burgundy, he could see the back of Lily's beautiful young shoulders, and her knot of burnished hair twisted high and stuck through with an amber dart—the little rings escaping from the knot curling upon the bare white column of her neck. As she had passed them, with a nod and a smile, the poor professor had been struck dumb by her dazzling appearance. It was not finery, surely, for her attire was of simplest white, girdled with white, and she wore no



ornaments. But he had never seen her before in evening dress, and he did not wonder that all heads turned to look at her, and, as to the Helen of the classics, "did her reverence as she passed."

"Amber—what is amber?" he was musing. "Tears of the Heliades, I think, when they wept over Phaeton's fall. They were changed into poplars, and their boughs dropped the precious gum. She is straight and tall, like a poplar, but her eyes have never wept."

Now this is what he said. To the waiter: "I will have another cutlet." To Banting: "It's awfully good of you, certainly, to give me an opportunity to see this. I'm not likely to see anything better of its kind. These people, I take it, represent your most

distinguished citizens. But tell me, if you don't mind : this upper stratum of republican society in your States in general—for what are its members distinguished? Has any one of them discovered or invented anything, or written a book that led thought in his time, or a successful play? Is there among them a great statesman, or surgeon, or scientist, or one of your brilliant editors or lawyers, whose names we know so well in England?"

"Hum!" said Banting; "you see *those* at dinners sometimes. But, as a general rule, they're too busy. They're bored by it, in fact. They send their women-folk."

"And your politicians?"

"They show up in Washington," Banting exclaimed, rather nervously.

"Fact is, you should go to Washington. It's unique. I run down there myself every season, for a week or so."

"But the politicians who are living in New York?"

"They can't serve two masters," Tommy said serenely. "Just let a man's name be published as at a swell ball or dinner, and his constituents of Avenue A pitch into him for a 'dude,' and away goes his 'infloence' in his 'deestricht,' and the newspapers never let up on him. Two or three fellows of our set have gone in for politics in New York, but they were young, you know. They'll have time to live it down."

"Then if this is society, such men as I ask about are *not* society?"

"Absurd!" said Banting. "Plenty

of 'em send their families. You can understand that to run a big machine like ours takes time."

"Then the ones who do have time to associate with the wives and daughters of the ones who don't?" persisted Jencks.

"Oh, they have mostly inherited great fortunes; in some cases have made their own and stopped," said Tommy easily. "They represent our leisure class, our equivalent for your aristocracy."

"Is it true, what a newspaper man told me, that there are gentlemen of inherited wealth among you who are actually and designedly segregating into a clique that shall exclude the present maker of money, the professional man taking fees for service

rendered to his client or his patient?"

"I give you my word I never heard anybody *say* so," said Tommy modestly. Being the son and heir of a late eminent haberdasher, Mr. Banting was rather flattered by this suggestion. "Hang it, Jencks, what do you expect of us?"

"I expected to find New York the flower of the materialism by which the world is leavened; and I've found it," remarked Jencks, putting sugar in his coffee.

"If we're material, what's London? What's Paris? Why, fellows over there will do anything for money. As I was going on to say, I believe you Britishers are half disappointed not to find us sitting around wigwam fires,

and to have our squaws wait on you, and be asked to go to the chase in Iroquois costume."

"I am disappointed to find so few who seem to value their country for anything it has achieved beyond heaping up colossal fortunes and laying so many miles of railroad. Those who treasure its traditions are about as isolated from the control of thought as one of the Aztec images up yonder in your Metropolitan Museum, where I spent the morning in company with perhaps a dozen other searchers after art last week."

"We'll catch up with history and the arts by and by," remarked Mr. Banting, with imperturbable good nature. "And if you'll stay over in New York till election time I rather think you'll find

a reason why the high patriotic business is about played out. Just go down to Castle Garden and study the kind of citizens we're acquiring every day to help to form our thought. Drop in at one of our courts and see our manufactory of voters at work. The other day I happened to be there when the judge was examining a scaly lot of organ-grinders and Russians, previous to naturalizing them. The first fellow he had up was an Italian, all garlic and ear-rings, and the first question asked was, 'What sort of a government is this?' 'Georga Washa, Georga Washa,' the fellow answered, like a parrot. But the judge pressed the question, and on being prompted in the rear the man rallied up with, '*Si, si, Republicanana,*' 'Who make the

laws?' was the next question, and again the answer was 'Georga Washa.' But after repeated coaching, Signor Garibaldi informed the court that 'de peep' make the laws, and was then admitted to be one of us—an American citizen. Another aspirant was a dirty, hairy Nihilist with a name like a sneeze. He couldn't speak a word of English, and the questions were repeated to him through a Russian interpreter. His only answers were a series of shrugs, and his face was as vacant as an owl's; but he, too, became entitled to the privilege I share with him. The law's exaction is that the would-be citizen shall be 'of good moral character and attached to the principles of the Constitution'; hence the style of interrogatory."



"That's a nice showing for your judiciary," Jencks said. "It's as bad as stealing votes."

"We must make allowance for a fellow-feeling in some cases, I suppose. When the judge happens to be foreign born himself, or the immediate descendant of a naturalized immigrant, his inclination to be indulgent with the new applicant for citizenship is sometimes irresistible, don't you know? At any rate, that's what we have to put up with, and it's stinging hard to bear."

"You are always 'putting up with' things. You're the most submissive race on earth to public outrages. And from a cursory view of the situation I'm inclined to the opinion that the least attractive features of your great

city, externally, are office-holders and ash-barrels," said Jencks, good-humoredly.

"Which is the *raison d'être* of Newport and Tupelo. Well, all said, and in spite of some weak points, I find our community a pretty good one to live in. You gibe at our extravagance, but what does money mean but the good things of life? If our millionaires have, so far, chosen to put their art into the best ways of getting comfortably around the world, who's profited by it, I'd like to know? Pictures and statues will come along. You don't find our charities behind-hand. They are among the most splendid in the world. In the last few years our grand new houses have been filled with treasures you were glad we

had dollars enough to pay for. Who'd buy all these crown jewels of defunct monarchies, tapestries and carvings from impoverished castles, bric-à-brac and books Europe can't afford to keep, if we did not? Even the East profits: Japan has to manufacture new curios, because her priceless old ones are in American collections. Wait till I can show you the houses of a few of our New York millionaires, and you'll see whether the Jeffersonian simplicity business is not played out to some good purpose."

"Don't show me anything more," Jencks said, laughing. "I am rapidly growing into the state of mind of that young fellow I heard of last week who failed as a society reporter, and went and hired a suit of evening clothes in

which to drown himself like a gentleman in the reservoir of Central Park. I believe it all to be enormously important."

"She has just the untrammelled walk that a young squaw might have," his thoughts took shape again. "If she were grinding corn in a hollowed rock she would be just as graceful. Oh, if she had not a penny, and I a ranch in the far West, what a glorious comrade for the wilds! Even this cobweb tinsel spun around her has not harmed her yet. But it will—alas! it will. And she is no more for me than I am fit for an atmosphere like hers. It is the wildest caprice of destiny that has made me love her. Well, I will regale my eyes this little while, and then—Walter Bagehot said he would enjoy

society if the little pink and blue girls were not so like each other. That's how I've always looked at it. She's not monotonous. She is continually changing, the embodiment of joyous youth at one moment, cynic the next. But the cynicism is only skin deep, and the freshness is perennial—"

"If you've finished your coffee, shall we go and smoke?" said Banting.

#### IV.

THE ball-room at the Tupelo club house is an octagonal apartment, with tints of opal iridescence in its dome and walls, and draperies of gray-blue plush. Around it runs a dais, with seats for dowagers and talkers. At one end is a stage for concerts and theatricals. On this were already grouped the picturesque Hungarians, tearing away wildly at their magic fiddle-bows, and filling the languid air with irresistible vitality. On the wide parquet, polished like an eggshell, groups of girls were strolling or waltzing together, with an occasional glance in the direction of the entrance-door,

beyond which, in billiard and smoking rooms, the men hid themselves, conscious of value as blessings to be not unduly lavished until sufficiently desired.

Even Lily, at ordinary times indifferent, kept a sort of covert watch upon the door.

Lady Melrose, accustomed to her forty winks after dinner before the men came in, had established herself with a supporter on each side. She resented the approach of ladies who would have chosen this hour for civilities. In her opinion there was too much discussion of everything among women in America. Upon the various questions of the hour, down to the smallest arrangement for social entertainment, was expended such a pro-

digious amount of animation. Nor did she meet with the enthronement as an oracle she had been led to expect. These easy, clear-headed, clever women were a surprise to her. One inconsistency alone was patent. She saw that they were cultured, beautiful, and well-dressed without extravagance. It soon transpired that most of those with whom she talked had journeyed into every civilized part of Europe and the East—that in no sense could they be called provincial. It struck her as a curious weakness that the achievement they apparently valued most was the three days' visit last year to Lady Such-a-one's shooting-box in Scotland, or the dinners and balls they had had cards for, the year before in London. Every hereditary title of their acquaint-



tance in the British peerage was rubbed up and made to do duty in reminiscent conversation. To Lady Melrose such warmed-over food was not refreshment. Her fad was temperance, and she had much rather have discussed the blue-ribbon movement in America, and the probabilities of getting an audience to listen to her expound her views in New York slums, than to indulge in Mayfair maundering.

“Yes, I dessay. Very smart, very pretty,” she answered to somebody’s appeal as to whether she did not find the present scene attractive. Then, turning to Mrs. Bertie Clay, “I wish you’d keep them off me for a bit,” added her ladyship, hunching her mauve shoulders and yawning. “If they would sit still I wouldn’t mind it.

They talk so much. And everybody makes me give my views of everything. I don't want to be made to talk. I want to be told stories, like those What's-his-name told me at dinner. He's a doctor, aint he, What's-his-name? He's really the best of the lot. I suppose he learned 'em to amuse his patients."

"Oh, but it's a long time since Dr. Clarkson practiced," interposed Mrs. Floyd-Curtis hastily. "You mustn't think he practices. He has an independent fortune, and is one of our most popular men in society."

"I've another story for you, Lady Melrose," said the object of their remarks, coming up at this interesting juncture. "Heard it just now in the billiard-room, and booked it for your

benefit. The place was—well, say Red Gulch, Oregon ; the scene, a hanging. Red Gulch, you know, was a brand-new ‘city’ in the hands of an enterprising land company, consisting, in point of fact, of a store and two houses, near which the gallows had been placed. From far and near people had come to enjoy the exercises of the day. No such gathering, in style and numbers, had been seen or was likely to be seen. At the moment when the clergyman had said his prayer, the condemned man had stepped upon the trap, and the sheriff had adjusted the noose, a thin, excited man in a linen duster, his hat in hand, full of papers, dashed up the steps of the gallows, and with a profound bow addressed the group.

“ ‘ If the gentleman now occupying

the platform will give way for *one* moment,' he remarked ; then, turning to the crowd, 'Ladies and gentlemen,' he went on, 'I call your attention to the fact that the Red Gulch Land Improvement Company has still for sale a number of valuable corner lots, which to those buying now will be sold by me at prices within the reach of all—'

"So much he had said before he could be stopped ; and having accomplished his purpose, cordially thanking and saluting the sheriff and the condemned, the intruder stepped down, and the 'gentleman occupying the platform' stepped 'out.' "

"Horrible !" cried Mrs. Floyd-Curtis.

"Fancy, now," said her ladyship.

"It's a fact," remarked Clarkson beamingly. "Another? Well, I was traveling in—er—Missouri—last year, and a fellow in the smoking-car with me sighed deeply as we passed a field of growing wheat.

"‘Things aint like they was,’ he said sentimentally. ‘Ten years ago I owned land in this vicinity—lived here, in short. Us gentlemen of the neighborhood took a man up on suspicion of horse-stealing, and he never denied it, and the boys just hung him to a tree. Well, we buried him in this here field we’re passing, and ’bout a week later came the news that he never done it. He warn’t no horse-thief, after all. He was a respectable citizen living in the next county, and the wust he ever done was to kill a man in a quarrel over

cards. He thought, you see, we was a-hanging him for that. Of course if we'd have known all he done was to shoot a Kansas man, we'd have never took the matter up. The joke was on us. But I told the boys I'd make all square with the widow, and I did.'

" 'How so?' I asked.

" 'Well, they just got up resolutions of sympathy with the family of the deceased, and I rode over with 'em and saw the widow, and—married her. I live there now, and she's in the ladies' car behind.' "

" 'Fancy, now,' said her ladyship again.

An hour later and the dance was in full swing. Jencks, who had several times gone to the threshold of the ball-room door and turned back, at last

strolled in, taking his seat in a remote corner. Lily was, as he soon discerned, queen-rose of the rosebud garden of girls, and on exceedingly good terms with her surroundings. He did not suppose she had noticed his arrival; but in one of the figures of the cotillon where the dancer may choose a partner she came swiftly in his direction, appealing to him with a little gesture of command.

"I'm awfully sorry, but I don't dance," he said, his heart thumping at the opportunity he had lost. "I have no right to be here. But if to-morrow I may see you for one moment—"

"Come to service at the little church; you may walk home with me," she answered, melting from his sight into the multicolored throng.

Next day, which was Sunday, a light, drizzling rain fell, and many of the ladies, Mrs. Floyd-Curtis among others, chose to stay indoors. Rain had ceased, but the yellow trees exhaled moisture and the lake seemed to be veiled in gray, as the two young people set out for their walk back to the club house.

"I wonder what I should say to you if I met you in fair weather," Lily remarked. "You are a perfect rain-crow."

"And you are a stormy petrel, that has become entangled in the rigging, to be held sacred on my voyage through life."

"Well done!" cried Lily. "You have certainly improved in gallantry. I have hopes of you. Ten years in



America, and we shall not know you for a British stoic."

"I am afraid not," returned Jencks, a tremor in his voice that he could not entirely repress. "But, indeed, I can't talk nonsense about you and me."

Lily tried to rally to her rescue something to turn away the tide she felt was ready to burst and overwhelm her.

"Don't talk then," she said. "Let me do all the talking. Then I'll be sure to go home and tell mamma that Mr. Jencks is the most agreeable man I know."

"You had better say as little as possible about me. I'm not inscribed in your mother's books. When I bowed to her last night she looked as if she were trying to think where she

had met that person, and Mrs. Clay simply cut me in cold blood."

"You were never half civil to Mrs. Clay. She gave you more than one opportunity on shipboard."

"I don't like that kind of woman. She makes my flesh creep. And—but I've no right to say what I began to say."

"Go on, please."

"It's only that I don't think she's a good friend of yours."

"She's a very intimate friend of mamma's," said Lily, a shade crossing her bright face. "And she has been so kind to me. I believe she can make mamma do anything she pleases."

There was a pause. Jencks was thinking, with terror, that his worst fears for Lily would be confirmed.

"I 'm not exactly meek," the girl went on. "But when I love people I like to please them in every way. My mother has been the tenderest, the most loving person to me, except my dear old daddy—and Mrs. Clay is so captivating. Oh, why did you put it into my head she's not my friend?"

"I am very sorry," Jencks said, humbly. "It was not considerate of you. I was thinking perhaps chiefly of myself."

"But you said she makes your flesh creep."

"Good heavens! so I did," cried Jencks. "That was abominably brutal. It's well I'm to leave these parts on Wednesday for Illyria."

"I never knew such a plain-spoken person as you are," she resumed.

"But when I'm inclined to take offense it comes over me that you have never told me anything that was not true—and truth seems to me so beautiful. It is like a rock to rest upon. So I forgive you the rest; but please don't abuse my friends, for they are all I have."

"Soon you will have a hundred new friends to choose from. In a few weeks they will be swarming around you. It will be only a question to whom you will throw the handkerchief."

"Your voice sounds cross. Why are you like a peevish child? Why should I not have friends? You, who are going to Illyria, what difference can it make to you?"

O Lily, Lily! what has become of

your pride of young womanhood that you stoop to set this snare?

Jencks did not answer her at first. He stalked along, swinging his closed umbrella, and splashing the water out of little pools. She stole a side glance at his face, and saw it dark and lowering, the vein between his brows swollen, the lines around his mouth more set than ever before. She thought she had offended him, and, like the child she was, moved fluttering closer to his side, and looked up into his eyes.

"Don't be angry," she said. "I did not mean to hurt you. I can't bear to have you look at me like that."

"God help me!" the young man burst out suddenly. "Oh, you are not blind; you have a heart that feels!

Don't you see that I love you better than life?—that if I asked you to marry me I'd be a cur? That day upon the steamer I thought for a moment—one mad moment—that you might care for me. I'll declare it gave me more pain than pleasure. But, in the time since, I've seen that it was my own delusion ; and I am glad. If I go away from you, it will be with resolution to live this passion down. It's because I respect my manhood as much as I love you that I'm going ; can't you see ?”

Lily, for all her coquetry of manner, knew not the arts of evasion. What was trembling on her lips to say, and was yet unsaid because he had told her he did not mean to ask her to be his wife, might have changed the course

of events and of this story. She was conscious of a wave of protest, of longing not to be left, like a child's clinging to the one who bids him farewell and sets him down to go away. And while these emotions were tearing her heart a carriage came around a turn in the road and the horses were pulled sharply up. Within sat Lily's mother and Mrs. Clay, the latter languid and indifferent, appearing to look at them through narrowed eyes.

"Lily! Why, Lily, you imprudent child!" cried Mrs. Floyd-Curtis. "It was only two days ago you were complaining of sore throat. Come in with me; I am taking Mrs. Clay for a turn before luncheon. Mr.—er—Banks—"

"Jencks, madam," said that person, bowing.

“Mr. Jencks can no doubt find his own way to the club. There, Thomas, you may drive on now. Good-morning, Mr. Banks.”

Jencks stood like a stock upon the roadside, watching the carriage roll away. Two men in knickerbockers, with billycock hats and blackthorn sticks, came up with him. The young fellows, who were off for a ten-mile tramp, eyed him curiously, and bestowed on him a civil greeting as they exchanged remarks about roads and distances. This circumstance gave Jencks the idea of setting out on his own account for a walk of indefinite duration. He struck over the hills, and did not make his appearance at the club house till after dark.

While Lily's maid was engaged in



attiring her young lady next morning, a knock at the door developed a bell-boy with a note. When she could be alone to read it Lily found these penciled words :

I write this at the station waiting for the train that will take me away from you. I tried to pass out of your life without another word, but vainly. With my whole heart and soul I love you. Good-by, and be happy always, and light of heart as you deserve to be and are.

I think it no shame to our Lily that she kissed the prosaic bit of railway paper again and again, raining over it a summer tempest of girlish tears. It seemed to her that a great black stone had rolled across the pathway of her life. This man, this stranger, who had been but a short time before one of the vast army of entities born into the world to cross and recross one another

unrecognized, how had he suddenly become the master of her heart? That is a mystery it would puzzle a deeper philosopher than Lily to answer. One fact, however, remained indisputable. He had come, he had gone; and with him the spring-time of her woman's life.

"Yes, he left last night. You managed the matter beautifully, you dear thing," said Mrs. Floyd-Curtis to Mrs. Clay the same morning, when the ladies were on their way to see a match at shooting pigeons.

"I knew from the moment he turned up here what his little game was," Barbara observed. "Banting, who is a goose, ought to have known better than to bring him."

"You are quite sure there has been

no gossip about their meetings on the ship?"

"Everything is talked about," said Barbara, discreetly generalizing. "But it will die out soon. The worst they can say is that she flirted—and in America, what's that?"

"But I never knew Lily to want to flirt before."

"My dear lady, it is an appetite that to most of us comes with eating," Mrs. Clay said, not refraining from a sneer. "Those big blond men, with broad shoulders and an air of caring only for themselves, are the most dangerous to girls. There's no denying the man was good enough to look at."

"But his name—how could my Lily fancy any one with such a dreadful name?"

"Well, he has taken his name away with him, and we may hope never to hear of it again. All I advise is, that for the future you keep an eye on Lily. This kind of affair at starting may give her a taste for them. Besides, there are other reasons—did I tell you? Lady Melrose says her son has cabled that he will join her for the journey to the West."

"But I thought he never sees his mother more than once or twice a year," exclaimed Mrs. Floyd-Curtis with sparkling eyes.

"Perhaps he means to turn over a new leaf, and will begin by attaching himself to his mother's apron-string. Perhaps he's tired of England. When I knew him he was tired of everything. At any rate he is coming to New York."

"I don't think I mentioned," resumed Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, after a moment's silence, "that Lady Melrose has promised me a visit before she sets out for the West."

"She is so very fond of you," answered Barbara, with a cooing little laugh, as she turned over for admiration the new bangle, with its ruby solitaire, that Mrs. Floyd-Curtis had that morning clasped upon her wrist. "And you will find Melrose so very nice."

MY DEAR MELROSE [had his mother in America written to the young lord who was tired of everything]: What I am going to say will no doubt bother you. But you know I never was by way of being afraid of coming to the point. There are some people here who have a daughter—I came over in the boat with them, and they were very civil. At first I thought this girl was bad-tempered, but now I think she is only saucy, and her temper is well enough—it is the habit these American girls have of asserting them-

selves in the presence of their superiors ; and that, it appears, one must get used to, like the iced water and the stuffy hot houses, where you can't breathe without opening the window. She is very pretty,—so pretty that people over here are making as much of her as if she were one of our princesses,—and her fortune is immense. Her own mother has told me that if the girl marries to please her she will receive four million dollars upon her wedding day, with more to come when the mother dies ; and there is but one other child, a boy at Eton, and you know the children here inherit share and share alike. Now, knowing the fuss you are in about money matters, and hoping that you have at last seen the necessity of settling down to keep up the estate, it occurs to me this chance is excellent for you. Of course they will jump at it. The father of this Mrs. Curtis made his money in—Something Oil, I think ; but he was formerly a grocer, and her husband still keeps a “store,” though to be sure he need not. One never sees the husband, but Mrs. C—— is now in the best society. Their home is a perfect palace, finer than Lord John's, or even the duke's. This mother and daughter dress in a way that surprises Timpkins, and seem to have always worn these fineries. When I say house, you'll understand I mean the town-house. They have no country-seat, but have bought land and are about to build a cottage. Everybody in America is talking of buying or building in the country. But when you come to see their country homes, they are just smart villas on the public road,—only fancy, on

the public road,—or else they have a beggarly few acres around them, and the house always in sight. Some of them live so close together that I believe they can talk from one veranda to another, which I consider shocking. Even their great men, the ones worth from fifty to a hundred million dollars, do the same.

If you don't care for this girl after seeing her, you might go with me to Chicago, and then go on and get a bit of hunting somewhere, so the trip wouldn't be thrown away. You said you wanted to try for mountain sheep in Wyoming. I'm doing very well, and would be willing to wait in New York until you come: and Timpkins has no complaint to make, as the beds are good, and one can have tea at any time. I've had no chance yet to speak in public about temperance, but there's a field for it in New York, and I shall certainly hope to do so before long. The most degrading exhibition of the general prevalence of this vice among the lower classes came to my personal experience a few days since, and if you meet dear Lady Jane I hope you won't forget to mention it to her.

We'd been, Timpkins and I, to see the asylum for lunatics, and some reformatories, and so on, upon an island near New York, and coming back the boat landed us at a wharf where there were no cabs to be had. So we took a little tram-car intending to go to the hotel; and a most filthy place it was, with market people and laborers squeezed up to me, and such a smell! I thought I would just improve the opportunity to distribute leaflets, and to say a word or two as we

went along. While I was getting to my bag the driver of the tram began to ring a little gong, and I observed that everybody's eyes were fixed on me. A woman next to me explained (very rudely) that we were expected to drop our fare into a box fastened near the door beside the driver. Then I found my purse was gone; luckily enough I'd but a few shillings in it, for I've not heard of it since. By that time the car had stopped and the driver put his head in, and I was in a pretty pickle.

"Have you no money, Timpkins?" I asked, and when she said, "No, my Lady, not a penny, please your Ladyship," there was the rudest laugh. It was evident they *were all intoxicated—every one*. One man said we were rum Salvation gals, and the brute of a driver said he'd seen my kind of a ladyship try to make a ride before. Just then Timpkins, who had gone quite pale and was crying, fished up out of the pocket of her gown some bits of silver. You may depend we got out of the wretched hole quickly, and for some time wandered around in the mire of a slum beside a river till we met a policeman, who found a cab that took us to the hotel. I shall mention this in my lectures when I return.

The way I happen to know about these Curtises is that the mother has been so uncommonly polite. To show you how they live, soon after we landed from the boat she invited me to an "informal luncheon," at her house in what is called Washington Square. Of course I went in my every-day gown and bonnet,



expecting to get a chop and a potato, and perhaps a glass of beer. But, dear me ! It was superb ; a great banquet, with the rooms darkened, and lighted by lamps and candles, and such banks of flowers as we'd never think of ordering in except for state affairs. We were at table for nearly three hours, and at every place were five or six wine-glasses, and the table loaded down with gold and silver, and Sèvres and Dresden and Minton china for each remove. Twelve women were at table, and they looked for the world and all like Kate Reily's fashion-plates, and talked all together in the shrillest way. When we got up to go into the drawing-room to drink coffee the servants gave us bouquets. A person at the luncheon told me she heard our hostess had ordered all the roses of a single variety that could be purchased in town, costing at least five shillings for each rose. We fetched away also *menus* printed in gold on satin, bags of sugar-plums, and other costly knickknacks. It was quite embarrassing. I felt as if I had been shoplifting. And this, they tell me, is an ordinary kind of entertainment among the ladies of New York. One must not expect to meet their men at luncheons. They are at work "down town."

Do, my dear Melrose, think over what I have said. You know better than I do how badly you need the money. Fancy my hearing a man say, yesterday, that he would rather be a hack-driver in New York than a poor peer in England. But all these people exaggerate, you know, and there are so many of us in the

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same box. Marrying an American isn't what it used to be. If I were not hurrying to catch this mail I'd tell you more about the girl herself. On second thoughts, I send you inclosed her photograph. I dare say you will be surprised, as I was, at a certain air she has—quite like one of us. But then most things here are a surprise. They don't talk a bit like Americans in novels. I am very much disappointed, on the whole, at the want of local color. But it is cheaper living than I thought. They invite you all the time.



## V.

"IT'S *really* kind of you to give us a quiet evening now," said Mrs. Emory, with the pretty emphasis peculiar to some women of New York. "In Lent I might have hoped for it, but *now*—"

"In Lent there'll be nothing left of me to come," said Lily. "Of course I shall dine with you with pleasure. It is kindness to myself."

When the occasion arrived upon which Lily was to perform this double act of beneficence it found her one of a small party in a house modest in size, but full of the belongings of culture just beginning to assert itself in the acquisition of minor works of art. The

first floor of the pleasant little home was given up to a narrow passage-way, where on opening the front door the maid-servant had to remain caged behind it to allow the entrance of the guest ; a drawing-room, which was library and picture-gallery as well, with a chimney-place devised for burning wood on andirons, and a faint odor of tobacco smoke mingling with that of some violets in Venice glasses ; and a dining-room in the rear, where the sun at breakfast-time made atonement for the again enforced compression of the maid when circling a table where eight might chance to sit.

When they were first going to house-keeping, and his wife was out of town, Fred Emory had visited an intelligence office with the hope of securing an at-

tendant physically adapted to the needs of his new home. After an ordeal in selection over which he had chosen to draw a veil, he came back exhausted, but doggedly determined to look no more. That day appeared in his premises a female grenadier, who, taking the family in charge, had remained with them ever since. The mammoth, confessing coyly to the name of Dottie, resigned herself to Martha, and was more intimately known to the habitués of the house as "The Misfit." When increasing prosperity and the demands of fashion entailed upon the Emorys consideration of a butler the idea was dismissed, as until Martha should die or marry the milkman there was no hope of emancipation from her thrall.

On the second floor of the Emory abode were the quarters occupied by wife and husband and a couple of pattern cherubs, in a nursery as bright as sunshine, chintz, and tidiness could make it. The Emory babes, accustomed to the companionship of their elders, were self-possessed, but happily unspoiled. When sent for to come below they received and bestowed greetings with rational understanding of their relation to society, resorting thereafter to the friends in whom the child's unerring instinct told them sympathy was waiting; or else, perching side by side like sparrows on a telegraph wire, they loved to look over certain bound volumes of *Punch*, the boy spelling out to the girl the legends his father had explained to him. It

never occurred to people to think Hal and Gladys in the way.

Houses however small, and maid-servants however disproportioned ; violets in Venice glass, good cigars, books, bronzes, etchings, hickory-wood for burning on esthetic andirons ; a dinner-table like an island of snow set with bright glass and silver, and growing ferns under a widespreading shade of crimson silk that lets fall a radiance of light on table only ; a pretty wife and two picturesque children able to indulge in nestling on downy sofas—all this does not come for the whistling in New York to a man who has begun life, after graduating from college, without a much larger capital than the traditional penny in his pocket. Fred Emory had worked long and hard at



his profession — law — before he ventured to think of marriage. He was past thirty when he took Grace Chauncey for his wife. Grace, whose people had been of the gentry in New York who had received and entertained General Washington after his inauguration there as President, had a small income of her own, and was, besides, wonderfully clever in managing and shaping matters of household comfort. Affairs had prospered with the two ; they had health and competence, and were but recently returned from the inevitable summer of European travel. About their home hung an atmosphere of literature and art, decidedly pleasant to an outsider. Emory, who was what is called a man's man, had not altered all the habits of his bachelor life in marry-

ing at thirty-three. Around him continued to gather artists, authors, editors, who were accustomed to mount upstairs to the den on the third floor where Fred's old worn furniture from his quarters in the University Building had been transferred, feeling assured of Mrs. Emory's liberality of view in the matter of evening clothes, and of the satisfactory resolution, early attained by Emory's kids, to sleep through anything.

Grace was an advanced musician, frequenting the concerts of the Philharmonic and Symphony societies *en virtuoso* rather than *en amateur*, and sternly refusing invitations to the opera to sit in the boxes of her chattering friends when there were Wagner metaphysics to be enjoyed by following the

score from a modest place in the par-  
quet. She was also fond of painting,  
and had recently taken up etching as a  
pastime, alternated with the claims of  
an excessive correspondence. She was  
president of a musical society where  
artists and amateurs united, secretary  
of a Woman's Essay Club, member of  
a Society for Promoting Higher Edu-  
cation for Women, manager of an  
Infants' Hospital, and of the board of  
a league to entertain shop-girls in a  
hall leased for the purpose. In addi-  
tion to the notes written, minutes kept,  
and reports drawn up in this connec-  
tion, Mrs. Emory had contributed to  
one of the leading magazines some  
articles upon the Niebelungen Trilogy  
from the standpoint of a Wagner  
devotee. She received her friends on

Monday afternoons and managed to go a good deal into society. To those inclined to look askance at these proceedings it was therefore a distinct discouragement when prosperity kept hand in hand with Grace's household. Her children, Fred's evident contentment with his lot in life, the sheen of her door-knob and bell-pull, the good fit of her jackets, and the renown of her roly-poly puddings, were unanswerable facts to the discontented commentators upon what John Stuart Mill calls the "interrupted sentence" of a busy woman's life.

As a matter of course, the Emorys always had cards for the first view of any great picture, or collection of pictures, porcelains, or bric-à-brac to be paraded before the metropolitan pub-

lic, and were made welcome in studios least accessible to casual sight-seekers. In their sixteen by twenty drawing-room might be met, on easy footing, certain lions who had positively declined to roar in arenas more extended. From their little cabinet piano were evoked strains of enchanting melody by fingers elsewhere only to be bought by high-piled shekels.

For Grace great singers had sung the folk-songs of their native land; to advance the good fellowship of an evening at the Emorys a player world renowned had volunteered a delicious bit of off-hand recitation, and an author of uncompromising hostility toward personal exhibition had read aloud his latest poem in manuscript. Framed upon their walls were auto-

graph squibs, caricatures, sketches, and here and there a finished study, by master hands. The tone of the whole house was easy, bright, and unaffected. Sometimes, to complete the caviare essence of Bohemia in her dish, Grace consented to let Fred have one of his old bachelor suppers, consisting of marrow-bones on toast or Welsh rare-bits and bottled beer. These symposia were less frequent as the wave of conventionality overwhelming New York made itself felt in this independent household. Who could attend a Floyd-Curtis banquet, for example, and come back to sit down with a band of conspirators in morning coats around a chafing-dish at 1 A.M. ?

Lily, who had first met Grace Emory at a class where young women went

to sit on camp-chairs and lend ear to chamber-music rhapsodically rendered by four young German instrumentalists, conceived for her an instant liking. Grace, when rallied by her husband for running with all the other sheep in town in search of a sensation, answered that she could not pretend to resist such a study in Titian's coloring, and that the girl's sweetness of disposition had finished by conquering her. The two coalesced into a friendship that was the more important to Lily because of the escape it offered into fresh atmosphere. She did not realize her need in this respect, perhaps, until she had heard a French comedian read aloud for Mrs. Emory's friends, over a cup of tea at five o'clock, Daudet's exquisite story of "*La Chèvre de*

M. Séguin," in the "Lettres de mon Moulin." She, like poor little Blanquette, was fed and sheltered in a paddock where grass grew green and brightest waters ran. But away over yonder, somewhere on the indefinite blue, were mountains, and on the mountain-tops was freedom—no matter what M. Séguin said, it was freedom Blanquette craved.

More than a year had elapsed since the incidents described as passing at Tupelo, and in that time much had taken place. The success of the carefully adjusted début of Miss Curtis into New York society had been immediate. There were now few desirable awnings under which Mrs. Floyd-Curtis might not walk. From the luxurious morning-room where that



lady gave daily audience to her secretary she had even the satisfaction of dictating who should walk under her awning and enter within the penetralia of her choicer parties. "This business of pleasing all one's friends," she remarked to the secretary, a young person liberally paid to address envelopes and to say oh! and ah! "is really becoming a problem in this town."

She resolved upon the advanced move of dividing her hospitality as follows: First, a "tea at four o'clock," for all the world, including the family clergyman and lawyer, friends of by-gone days, discarded stepping-stones, cousins who live in Harlem, and distinguished old residents of the Second Avenue who have delicate throats and are rarely seen out after dark. Next,

an evening party, with early hours, classical music, plenty of terrapin, and the phonograph.

"This will cover all the 'heavies' who don't dance," she observed to little Miss Perkins. "They wouldn't be satisfied with an afternoon affair; they expect champagne, you know. Bank presidents and big railroad men and that kind of thing hate tea."

"So true," murmured little Miss Perkins, who lived in a flat on the Seventh Avenue and helped to support her mother by the present occupation, for which she had renounced that of reader to invalids.

To herd in the rest of Mrs. Curtis's acquaintance there was to be, thirdly, a "small and early"; in reality a large and late cotillon. To this she pur-

posed bidding only the list of names published so often in the newspapers that a devout reader of society columns ought to be able to recite them backwards, as the devil says his prayers. For it were to be reserved the jungle of hot-house greenery upon the stairs, the roses scattered as if by the hand of June, the favors brought from Paris, two orchestras, a banquet on golden dishes, and the Only—the Ineffable—to lead the german. For the renown of this affair she was willing to suffer the penalty of having all the skeletons in her family closet dragged before the public by the press and by old friends omitted from her list, as well as discussed behind fans in every corner of her resplendent rooms by the partakers of her bounty.

Add to such undertakings the dinners that fashion ordains to be recurrent at short intervals throughout the season ; dinners to insure the success of which required such nicety of forethought, such tact, such diplomatic planning ! It really makes one ache in sympathy with the cares of a lady of Mrs. Floyd-Curtis's high place.

" There, that's settled, thank goodness ! " she would exclaim when laying down a completed list. " And if anybody doesn't like it, let them lump it, I say. But when Lent comes, if there are any other women to be 'done,' I'll just give a 'consolation' lunch, and have it over."

Following these tactics, and by the powerful aid of her now bosom friend, Mrs. Bertie Clay, there were few ob-

stacles to the successful achievement of her aim. I have no sort of doubt, though, that the fortnight's visit from the Countess of Melrose before going to the West convinced New Yorkers of Mrs. Floyd-Curtis's real merit. If there had been any lingering hesitancy on this question, the arrival of the young earl, and the business-like way in which he proceeded to attach himself to the Floyd-Curtis train, would have removed it. He was seen with them everywhere, even walking with Lily on the shady side of the Avenue before twelve o'clock meridian—and we all know what that means when the attendant third is a golden collie dog.

So much disappointment to democratic eyes has resulted from the external appearance of noble Englishmen

upon their travels in the States, that that of Lord Melrose might have been regarded as a triumphant vindication of his order. He was manly, vigorous, and distinguished ; nor did he wear at entertainments a shabby suit of mustard colored tweeds. He bore himself with sufficient consideration toward his fellow-beings of less exalted rank, showed no tendency to sprawl or yawn at dinner parties, and carried an umbrella that might have been folded by Monty Brabazon. He was not brilliant. Conversation with him, after passing the middle ground of sport and horses, was apt to languish. He was a lukewarm politician, a poor historian of England's glorious past, and was puzzled, not to say bored, by the challenge of enthusiastic Americans about

the relations of his own family to public matters as written in the books. It is one of the keenest of backsets to a republican aglow with interest in the picturesque side of an exalted ancestry to find how cheap its modern representatives account their centuries of tradition. To stir their souls into responsiveness requires no draft upon history more remote than the tour in the States and the dollars thus acquired by some "Polly" or "Violet" of the London music-halls. To share in these tastes, and in many others which are the outgrowth of the age we live in, Lord Melrose found many sympathizers in New York. He was a delight to that crop of golden youths who may be seen any afternoon in the Fifth Avenue, with trousers turned up,

well-fitted body-coats with large buttonholes of white flowers, and high hats, striding along as if sprinting for a prize, and swinging their sticks with diligence—enough like the original article to be scarcely distinguishable from it at close approach. All of his hours except those devoted to Miss Lily Curtis were claimed by rapturous admirers. He was barely allowed to sleep at his hotel.

It was a foregone conclusion that Lily would end her first season by announcing her engagement to the earl. The old ladies in the club windows and the old ladies at the tea-parties had promptly settled this. The whole affair was regarded as an uncommon windfall of those Floyd-Curtises. The idea of the family making objections



on the score of old scandals, with which London had now done, was not even advanced. Nobody with eyes in his head could see anything but appropriateness in the success which was a "walk-over" for Melrose. Lily's beauty, Lily's fortune, his title, his present condition of moral whitewash—a perfect balance; so much better than those things are in general. And then, that his mother should have succumbed with such complacence! That she had gone home to rub up the family jewels and to prepare to present her American daughter-in-law in London! Lily would have three country houses and one in town. Some reporter had been sent to visit the best of these future dwellings, and had cabled a description of its glories to

New York. How many of the girls who read that glowing article at breakfast but would have given their heads for Lily's luck!

The only obstacle to Lily's luck was—Lily! She liked Lord Melrose, her brain was a little touched by the excitement of the situation, and when he duly asked her to be his wife and the owner of the four houses her money was to put into habitable shape, she was very near to saying "yes."

What she said did not transpire. Guessers had it that Melrose had flunked on coming to the point, and when he sailed away had left the Floyd-Curtises as inconsolable as Calypso at the departure of Ulysses. Soon after, it appeared that Mrs. Floyd-Curtis had taken a house in

London for the season, and that she and her daughter were to go over in April with Mrs. Bertie Clay, which threw conjectures again into confusion.

With this move began Mrs. Clay's first visible requital for services rendered the Floyd-Curtis family. London was the Mecca of her hopes. Having tasted London, all else was dust and ashes. Her native city appeared a place of crudities, of uncertain values, of wearisome unrest, by comparison. As guest she would be virtually mistress of the Floyd-Curtis mansion in Mayfair. The idea presented possibilities that had for practical purposes no boundary. She was quite prepared to join with the aristocrats who might accept their hospitalities in making sport, afterwards, of

“these innocent Americans who come over here to entertain.” Contrasted with last year, her condition was immensely altered for the better. When Mrs. Floyd-Curtis first met her the artless Barbara had been, figuratively speaking, holding her little hand over the leak in the bottom of her boat. And now—well, no one could say that Mrs. Floyd-Curtis did not pay well for what she got.

At the close of the three months in London, during which Lord Melrose had been reported to be as much with the Curtis family as before, the beauty and her train returned to America, giving Newport, Bar Harbor, and Lenox, successive glimpses at her charms and toilets, and settling down for a second winter in New York,

repeating the routine of the first. Early in December the earl was again seen at the clubs and in attendance on Miss Floyd-Curtis. Still, no congratulations had been asked. What meant this mystery?

Not to commit the cruelty of keeping a reader in suspense, I may say that Lily had put her suitor upon a year's probation, and that the earl, being supplied with plenty of incidental diversions, and in no hurry to change his estate, had submitted in a matter-of-fact fashion which left her mind at ease. Melrose had been shooting at grizzlies in the West, and after a cruise in a friend's yacht among the Bahamas was fishing for tarpon in Florida, whence it was settled he should return to New York

to receive his fair one's ultimatum. Having no sort of doubt of the result, he had made up his mind that Lent would be as good a time as any to enter into pre-matrimonial bonds.

No sooner had Lily come into her friend's drawing-room than Mrs. Emory observed upon her face a look of more than usual animation. For at this epoch of a beauty's career it is common to see the consciousness of perpetual observation from the public harden the mobility of youthful lines and chill the manner into mere languid receptiveness of tribute. Lily was no longer the tricksome wood-nymph of our earlier chapters, but a breathing picture of conventionalized young womanhood—a type of the per-

fectured artificiality of a society that has no parallel in forcing growths.

To-night her eyes deepened to velvet softness, her cheek regained its vivid bloom. The children, whom she picked up alternately, caressing them with entire indifference to the rare roses at her breast, hugged her with strangling arms. To Hal and Gladys she was the fairy princess of every nursery tale.

"See, you have brought us a waft of the sweet South," said Mrs. Emory as her guests, including, with Lily, but a few men of their nearest friends, sat down to table. She pointed to a silver dish in the center, containing oranges, bedded in gray moss, and half covered with sprays of yellow jasmine and fresh orange

blossoms. "What luxury to breathe it in such weather, with the hail dashing against our window-panes! You were very generous to part with these."

"They were sent by—they came to me from Florida to-day," the girl said, blushing rather uncomfortably. "I remembered your fancy for orange blossoms, in which I do not share."

"Isn't that heresy in a young lady?" began her host, and was checked by a message by matrimonial telegraph across the table. Grace, who had received the box in its express wrappings, much as it had first come to Lily, had a surmise of her own upon the subject of the donor.

"There's a twin sister of the orange blossom we never see here," Lily's neighbor on the right remarked. "It



is too fragile to bear transportation. It is like the flower of a dream. I mean the Cherokee rose. I shall never forget my first impression of its radiance, under a blazing blue sky of March in an orange grove near Enterprise. Above me was a huge spherical mass of polished foliage at the summit of a high, smooth trunk, and on one side of it oranges and blossoms, gold and cream-white; on the other, a bridal veil, a cascade of Cherokee roses, cream-white and gold—wide-open, flaring petals of exquisite grain and tint, and the hearts pure gold!"

"Dante Rossetti would have made a picture of it first, and written a poem about it after," Mrs. Emory said. "There is so much in Florida

to be yet sung and painted. I have been always waiting for inspiration to deal with the subject of the Ocklawaha River. That interminable, sinuous, green water-way beneath the cypresses; all around, far as the eye can penetrate those lonely woods, a swamp filled with noisome and pestilential creatures. Above, particularly at night, when the pine-knots are lighted in the braziers of the boat, the wondrous tracery of boughs and parasitic vines and nesting birds against the sky; the cry of those unearthly loons; the alligators and moccasin snakes in loving conclave on every projecting log along the bank at either side; the songs of the negro waiters from the rear deck after nightfall; above all, the sense

one has, when on this long day's voyage, and before emerging into the broad sweep of the St. John's River, that it will never, never end. It was to me like a page from the "Inferno."

"You should set it to music," mischievously suggested her husband. "And, with a good deal left to the imagination of the audience, it might be a success. You will of course use brass abundantly for weird effects. I can imagine the flop of the alligators, but I confess it floors me to think how you'll bring in the mocasins. However, in your school these little difficulties do not count for much."

"I wont even rebuke you, after that glorious performance of 'Tristan and

Isolde' last night," answered his wife placidly. "Our 'school' held an immense audience spellbound, even the worst of the talking boxes. At the end of the first and second acts the singers and the conductor were recalled time after time with tumultuous applause. Just wait till you read the notices, and perhaps you'll credit me."

"I will read them," answered Fred heroically. "I will read anything in print, except descriptions of scenery and stories in dialect. But don't ask me to sit out one of your music dramas. Life is too short for it, unless perchance the directors are merciful and work in a ballet."

Lily felt thankful that the talk, set afloat by her unlucky orange blossoms, had drifted away from Florida. Since

the night before, when at the opera a mere accidental turning of the head had brought to her the unexpected sight of the man she so obstinately preferred to other men, her mind had been soaring on golden pinions into a region of hope renewed. What exactly was to come—how it was to come—she dared not formulate into probabilities. He had been gazing at her, how long she knew not, when their eyes had met, and his look had conveyed every assurance a woman could exact. In that glamour and glitter of latter-day magnificence their two souls had touched and blended as naturally and simply as if alone in the first trysting-place for lovers upon earth. All day she had moved about, listening, expecting something that had not come. But it

would, it would ! She had faith in him, he had not changed any more than she ; her long ordeal was over ; together they might move mountains from their path.

So, with answering gayety, she threw herself into the pleasure of the passing hour. Talk ranged from art to literature, touched lightly upon philosophy, and "brushed with extremest flounce the circle of the sciences." Grace and Lily, often more content to listen, contributed intermittently to the conversation, at no time strained to keep up to a conventional standard. Philip Strange, the architect, whom they accused of being the pessimist of Emory's clique, had, at the conclusion of one of his characteristic jeremiads about the decadence of society in the hands of

✓ plutocrats, drawn a glowing picture of a socialist riot in the Fifth Avenue of the future, with the mob from the slums marching through picture-galleries and feeding on truffles from the tables of the great.

"After that," cried Grace, "I shall be afraid to offer you one of my rissoles. I am guiltily conscious that they contain truffles chopped by my own hands. But it was a very little box, Mr. Strange; one of the half-size provided for the deserving poor. I cribbed the idea of these from a swell luncheon the other day; and, between us, Cookey and I evolved the present specimens."

"Don't be alarmed, Strange," remarked Emory, with a bit upon his fork. "See, I will lead the way.

I've been the subject of so many experiments in cookery I've become quite brave and reckless."

"All the same, I tell you," pursued Strange, devouring his rissole in three mouthfuls, "what I say is true. The imbecility of marking class lines and expecting people to live within them in a place like this is patent. Those that have got the upper hand are mere blind beetles; they fancy they can keep up this parade of exclusiveness, this tremendous display of luxury within two or three avenues of a huge, restless, craving, increasing, plotting mass of tenement-house people who sit in their shirt-sleeves after working hours • and read in the penny papers about whole houses decorated with orchids of fabulous price, and a fortune expended



on some trumpery little jug. Some day they will tire of such reading, and will swarm out of their human honey-combs — these workers who are not content to live on the smells from a rich man's saucepan — and then—”

“ Please stop there,” said his hostess. “ Keep the rest of it for the den upstairs. You are putting us in the same frame of mind with the two professors of — University, who were sipping their after-dinner coffee. ‘ After all, Smith,’ said Professor Jones, ‘ what would life be without coffee?’ ‘ True,’ said Smith, ‘ but then what is life *with* coffee?’ ”

“ It appears to me I saw Strange's name in the list of guests at the Cræsus's musicale,” remarked Carlton.

"And if I'm not mistaken, he's to build the new palace at Newport for that lucky dog Robinson, who married Miss Golding, the California million-heiress."

"This laborer is worthy of his hire," said Strange composedly. "But just let me say two words more, Mrs. Emory. I want to touch on an aspect of the social question that concerns you and me and the other people representing moderate means and—not to put too fine a point upon it—liberal culture in New York. If we lived in London, we'd just sit still and eat and drink among ourselves, with indifferent acquiescence to the limit prescribed by destiny. But here—perish the thought!—we are as good and as worthy to be exalted as any Van Shu-

ter that ever built himself a lordly pleasure house—”

“Or paid Strange to build it for him,” put in Carlton.

“We associate ourselves with the diversions of such people, and come home inclined to think all minor forms of entertainment impossible. We are paralyzed by their facility of accomplishing results for which we strain. Except in a few houses—I bow to a shining example, Mrs. Emory—the old, easy interchange of hospitalities has vanished. We hire men but a little advanced beyond Thackeray’s ‘green-grocers in disguise’ to impersonate the retainers our millionaires display to line their halls and stairways. We dare not set one wine-glass less at table than we have seen on theirs. We

offer to our guests entrées of the same ridiculous elaboration—”

“Thanks for my poor rissoles,” said Grace.

“They are delicious, and I am longing for another,” answered Strange. His need was at once supplied, with a sympathetic grin, by the Misfit, who had not yet attained the art of conventionalizing, while on duty, her broad countenance to a proper lack of interest in the company’s affairs. “Well, you all know what I mean. Everybody must see it. It’s the old fable of the earthen pot and the iron pot drifting down the stream together.”

“I know,” said Grace. “Half the pleasant homes of my acquaintance are spoiled by that very thing. The hostess breaking her heart over a mis-

taken sauce, or wondering if she can get the cost of this week's florist's bill out of next week's market money, while the guests sit around the table trying to repress the natural exuberance of their spirits, because the Van Shuter dinners are known to be so deadly dull."

"My complaint is against the girls," said Emory. "It's bad enough to see the women aiming for the 'repose which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere,' but when it comes to the nice, frank, outspoken girls one knew in their salad days in the families of one's friends settling down into wax figures fit for the Eden Musée—"

"You have nothing to do with the girls," said his wife. "Keep in your proper place, and your sensitive spirit

will not receive such shocks. Lily, dear, you will see that I live in a nest of image-breakers. They respect no *convenances*, no authorities. They despise 'society.' But I've always observed that they accept all their invitations."

"Me too!" piped up Dick Huntley, who lived in the Benedick, with his violoncello and a pair of dachshunds. "I'm waiting to put in my little oar. The question is, you know, as things are going on now, how are any of us fellows ever going to marry?"

"Don't," said Strange lugubriously.

"I'm not," answered Dicky—"I'm thirty years old, and I've got all I can do to keep my rooms and pay my washerwoman—unless I ask some girl to help me out with the washerwoman,

and buy her own beefsteaks and frills and things."

"Take her to Hoboken," advised Carlton. "Lodgings are cheap and salubrious in that sequestered spot, tripe is said to be wholesome diet, and ferry-boats are frequent to New York."

"Don't be deluded," said Grace. "That suburban sort of bliss wont suit any girl trained as ours are now. 'All for love, or the world well lost,' is out of vogue. Take her away to the backwoods, or else leave her in New York. I often lie awake at night thinking how poor Hal will manage. Gladys, now, I shall make it my business to bring up to be independent of any need to marry. She shall learn stenography—"

A burst of laughter interrupted her.

"Why not? I am quite in earnest," she went on. "Oh! I feel so sorry for the multitude of girls in our class who have nothing to do with their lives after twenty-five. They flutter their brief hour in society, and if they fail to marry as they or their friends expect, they're so deplorably *de trop*. Some of them hold on like grim death to rosebud privileges. The clever ones know when to fall back on dinners and charities, or collecting missals, or musical instruments, or patronizing dog shows and afternoon teas. Those who have country places sometimes go in for amateur farming, and sell eggs and butter stamped with the family crest. But it's all fitful and vexatious to the spirit. And when there's no money it's simply dreadful. Everybody knows



there are too many women in the world. The idea of educating them to believe that marry they must, or be laid upon the shelf, and that marry they can't unless every detail's in keeping with modern style! It's very well for you men to gibe, but just wait till you come to try it for yourselves."

"This from you, Mrs. Emory!" said Carlton. "You, who are our last hope and stronghold of belief in marriage for love's sake. If you fail us, Dicky and I will die unwed. We will trust no maiden to lay her fairy hand in ours, and go to the confines of the earth in following our fortunes—unless, indeed, it be one of the comfortable, chicken-raising spinsters who is weary of her single blessedness. Miss Floyd-Curtis, now, hasn't given her testi-

mony. Perhaps she may dispel the gloom that is gathering on our spirits."

"I have no idea of betraying the secrets of my craft," Lily said. While they chatted, her fancy had played with one theme as a fountain holds up a ball in its crystal column. "Besides, you have taken the ground from beneath my feet. But I can't help thinking there are a few true women left."

"Do you mean some who'd be willing to buy their bonnets as we do our hats, when the other one wears out?" asked Dick Huntley eagerly. "Because, by Jove! I saw a milliner's bill once, and I saw the bonnet, and I give you my word, it frightened me, their relative size was so wildly disproportioned; and I stayed a bachelor."

“By the way,” said Carlton, when the game was served, “I dined at the Maryland Club last week, and we’d the breast of a canvasback duck apiece, perfectly cooked and served,—a lesson to our New York caterers,—with a bottle of old Madeira mellowed in the garret of a Baltimore *gourmet*. There were six men only, and we ate the duck course in solemn silence, all except the man the dinner was given to, an Englishman, who did his best to be polite, but couldn’t finish his. He was a fellow you know and like, Emory—Jencks of Illyria University.”

“He told me of his failure to meet expectations,” said Emory. “That’s likely to be the only one set down against his name. Tell me, Carlton,—I haven’t had time to read it,—about

Jencks's book. Does it promise well?"

"Rather!" said the journalist, emphatically. "Why, it's immense. We gave it a two-column review in our Sunday issue a fortnight ago. That was the first of any length. The others are all coming along with notices, and there's not one but what praises it, as he deserves. You know that kind of specialist work wakes up the public slowly. He's a little dogmatic, perhaps, but as clear and sound as a bell, and the style is masterly. Of course, though, you can't expect for it a popular craze."

"Jencks doesn't care a rap for popularity," Emory replied. "I'd a talk with him this afternoon at Brett's, his publisher's, and begged him to come home to dinner with me, but—"

“ Mr. Jencks in town ! *Ernest Jencks* ? ” queried Mrs. Emory, in staccato. “ Why, I had no idea— ”

“ He came over from Baltimore for a day or two only, to see Brett about his book, and would have been glad to look in on us but that his train for the West leaves at nine o'clock, ” Fred went on, talking down his wife, as the best of husbands will.

“ Nine o'clock ! It is almost that now, ” cried Grace. “ Oh, what a pity ! There's nobody I'd rather have seen than Ernest Jencks. ”

“ I back that man for a sure success, ” said Carlton. “ He's made his mark already at Illyria, but I doubt if they hold on to him. Ten years hence he will belong to our country ; no narrower limit will contain him. I

only wish his Alma Mater would send us out a few more of his sort."

"There are none to spare," said Emory. "Young England needs them as much as young America. Putting his brains out of the question, Jencks is a pure type of Froude's Britons, 'a sturdy, high-hearted race, sound in body, and fierce in spirit.' One thing may be depended on. Whatever he sets out to do, it will be done."

"May I give you the salted almonds? Have you met this Professor Jencks?" asked the young man at Lily's right.

"Yes," the girl said faintly, as the clock rang out nine cruel silver strokes.

And, turning his stubborn back upon New York, the professor was at that

moment punishing himself for a passing indulgence of the eye, by what Arnold of Rugby calls "the silent pleasure so dear to every Englishman, of enduring, resisting, and struggling with something, and not giving way."

## VI.

ON the day following the Emorys' little dinner Lily, in her plainest walking dress, came into her mother's morning-room. This apartment, so recently decorated as to be yet fragrant with shellac, was designed to repeat the boudoir of a French king's favorite, with walls of sea-green tint and Vernis Martin polish, and panels with nymphs disporting under gilded wreaths. Amid the studied confusion of its chairs, screens, tables, new buhl and old brocade, Mrs. Floyd-Curtis did not supply the completing note of harmony. Luxurious ease was not written upon her countenance. She



was in truth under the disadvantage of what, in her bourgeois days, was called being "in a stew." Her face was flushed, her temper uncertain. She had dismissed her secretary, and now sat before a litter of notes and cards and letters. Among the latter was a semi-official communication, detailing certain incidents of her son's career at Eton not inspiring to a parent. There was also a "statement" from her firm of "artistic decorators," exasperatingly in excess of the sum agreed upon in suavest oral intercourse—one of those bills that blister before and after they are paid. The butler had just retired, after elaborating the history of a feud between himself and the *chef* that threatened to depopulate the house of servants. Mrs. Peter van

Shuter had sent out cards for a very especial dinner which omitted her most recent friend. Last, not least, upon the table, staring at her with odious legibility of print, lay a newspaper with a paragraph announcing the evident collapse of the Floyd-Curtis scheme to secure Lord Melrose for the beauty, to which were added speculations as to the genuineness of Lily's bloom, with a sketch of her maternal grandfather.

Altogether, Mrs. Floyd-Curtis was so overcome as to allow herself the whispered phrase that she was "clean beat out." It was one of those crises in which people owning private cars go to Mexico, or Puget Sound, or St. Augustine. Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, bound to the stake by the approaching return of Lily's suitor, could not even in-

dulge herself in resorting to enlistment in the noble army of "N. P's" (or nervous prostrates), who are content with Lakewood.

"Well, child, why aren't you in your habit?" she asked sharply. "You need exercise. You look pale, and there are rings around your eyes. Thompson says you send her away at night, and there's no telling when you go to bed. I insist upon your riding every day you have the chance. Anybody with half an eye can see that your looks are going off. As if I hadn't enough of troubles to my share!"

Lily was indeed pale, and until her mother had quite finished speaking she stood listless.

"I was going to beg for a day off,

mamma," she said. "A morning for my very own."

"Nonsense, child! What would you do with it! Some eccentric scheme of Mrs. Emory's, no doubt. I'm not at all certain about this friendship with the Emorys."

"I think you may feel easy, mother," Lily said, with a half smile. "You know the Van Shuters invite them to dinner at least once a year."

"Really? Well, one should never forget that Grace Emory was a Chauncey. It's her husband you can't be sure of, whether he is ridiculing you or not. Lily, before you go, I'm feeling very down to-day—everything goes wrong. I know I said I wouldn't ask you questions till the time is up. But consider, dear; he is coming back on

Saturday; so much depends on it—you can't mean to fail me now."

The mother spoke with feverish excitement. The girl reared her head with the pride of the partridge keeping watch over her brood. The rich blood surged into her cheek in a fashion to give the lie to the defamers of her bloom.

"Mamma, mamma, you promised!"

"May I come in?" And accustomed to the freedom of the house, Mrs. Bertie Clay, without announcement, appeared in the space made by the footman in withdrawing a portière.

"How awfully lucky I am to find both of you!" she said, gliding forward to bestow upon each of her friends a handshake with her elbow on

the level of the ear. "Lily, dear, that costume suits you down to the ground. How I envy women who can be *chic* in what a nursemaid can afford to wear."

The little lady dropped into an easy chair, letting her muff and a long serpentine boa of blue fox fall away upon the floor.

"Really, dear, your room is perfect. There can be nothing like it in New York."

"Reporters have been already asking to write it up for the Sunday papers. Lily—"

"Then I may go, mamma?" interrupted the young lady, who for some reason did not respond as cordially as of old to the new-comer's overtures of friendship. "Good-by; I shall have

Joseph and the brougham, and I shall not be at home for lunch."

"Where now?" ask Mrs. Clay, looking after her curiously as Lily disappeared.

"Oh, my dear, I'm that upset this morning that I didn't even ask. Some class, or school, or meeting, with Mrs. Emory, of course. Girls are all fads nowadays. As for me, what with one thing or another, I am that put about I feel ready to fly."

"I don't wonder, you poor thing," cooed Mrs. Clay. "I see you have a copy of that wretched article. Two marked copies came to me with my breakfast. You observe how contemptibly they mix my name with the affair. Of course it is all over town by this time,"

This thought was too much for Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, down whose ruddy cheeks rolled two very genuine tears.

"I tried to get to you as early as I could," went on the sympathizer. "I know you take these things so hard. And there's another matter I wanted to talk about in confidence."

"Nothing bad, I hope," ejaculated poor Mrs. Floyd-Curtis forlornly. She was beginning to have experience in the privileges of intimate friendship with Mrs. Bertie Clay.

"Not bad, of course, but just a little queer. Promise that you won't breathe a word of it to Lily. Well, it was at the opera, night before last, when I took your place in chaperoning her. I'd observed that during the early part of the evening she had never seemed



so bored and spiritless. She let the men come and go, without the least effort to retain them. In the *entr'acte*, when both she and I were talking to our visitors, I noticed her eyes roaming absently over the people in the parquet. Suddenly a most extraordinary change came over her. Her face positively lighted up, she leaned forward and smiled, and then as suddenly drew back and tried to recover her self-possession. It was all over in a minute. She did not know, but quick as thought I had my glass up, and was looking in the same direction."

"And you saw—"

"Bah! he was big enough and *bête* enough. Standing up in a row of men back of the stalls, and staring with all his eyes at our box," said Mrs. Clay

contemptuously, "I saw that everlasting Jencks."

"She has not seen him for a year. She *can't* care for him. It's ridiculous!" exclaimed the mother.

"The only part I thought inexplicable was that, with so much 'encouragement, the man should have turned his back and walked out of the door. I did not catch another glimpse of him that evening, nor did she, I am sure, for I saw she was on the watch."

"She could not have met him last night, at the—it would be just like his impudence to go turning up at the—they're so odd in having people of that kind—no, for she told me all the men that dined at Mrs. Emory's," pursued the anxious mother.

"And she's moping now, don't you see?" suggested Barbara. "Depend on it, she's not laid eyes on him. Oh, trust me! I know girls."

"I'm the most unfortunate woman in the world," cried out Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, fresh tears coming into her eyes. "My nervous system won't be worth a row of pins if this goes on much longer."

"It is deplorable for you," sighed Barbara. "Few people have your high-strung sensibility. Now, dear, brace yourself; take your luncheon, and let us go for a good drive in the Park. Remember that in a few days your ordeal will be ended."

"Yes, but how? Melrose will be here on Saturday, but who knows

how that obstinate girl will treat him? She's just as likely to fly off the handle after all. Why, yesterday there arrived from him a most beautifully packed box of oranges in their own leaves and blossoms, and a layer of moss and yellow jasmines over it. What did she do but glance at it, put his card in the fire, and send the whole thing on to some one else. She has no sentiment. She's like a stone to Melrose, and see how beautifully he's behaved! So gentleman-like—so patient."

"Yes, he is very patient," Barbara allowed, bending over to examine a photograph of Lord Melrose set in a frame of Rhine-stones, in which attitude she could not be observed to smile. The whole thing was begin-

ning to be a farce to her. It had long since overtaken her slender stock of sympathy. She thought Melrose a fool, and had told him so, for submitting to Lily's whims. She was worn out with the woes of Mrs. Floyd-Curtis on the subject, and had caricatured them more than once among her own congenial followers. Between herself and Lily, who had been unpleasantly enlightened as to pretty Barbara's ways by several occurrences during their stay in London, a tacit war had set in.

"Lily is headstrong," she admitted, knowing too well that a more active expression of disapproval would bring the frowns of her patroness upon herself; and then by judicious flatteries and gossip she contrived to

stem the swelling tide of the poor woman's sorrow until their lunch was served.

After this repast, where, under the chilling supervision of the first, second, and third men, the ladies picked at some birds and trifled with aspic jellies, the carriage was announced. It was an open carriage, of course; for since Mrs. Peter van Shuter's return from London, with an asthma that required daily exercise in her landau with the top thrown back, no self-respecting woman of New York could have been induced, no matter how nipping cold the wintry weather, to exhibit herself in the Park behind the glasses of a closed vehicle. Mrs. Floyd-Curtis suffered horribly from neuralgia in the head, but then every

one could see she knew how they do the thing in England.

The address given by Lily to her coachman on entering the brougham was neither that of Mrs. Emory nor of any of her accustomed places of resort. She had, in fact, resolved upon a bold and unprecedented stroke. She was going to call upon a gentleman and make him give her luncheon. The number and street contributed to Joseph's listening ear were those of the down-town store of Mr. Eliphalet F. Curtis. She enjoyed the long jolting drive along Broadway, and even the perilous delight of finding her trim little carriage caught now and again, like a nut in the crackers, between some huge beer-wagon, drawn by three Normandy draft-horses abreast, and a

line of blocked street cars, with vehicles to the right, left, everywhere, stationary and continually increasing in number, while passengers protested and drivers swore. To cross from one side of the jammed thoroughfare to the other necessitated feats of agility that would have done credit to a harlequin. Bolder pedestrians would dodge under the heads of horses or across the platforms of the cars. Timid ones, and women with shopping bags and parcels, contented themselves by craning heads from either sidewalk and asking questions, imperfectly supplied with answers from the blue-coated policeman who vainly strove to straighten out this puzzle of the streets. To the nationalities that go to swell such a crowd of every day in



lower Broadway all Europe and parts of the East contribute, and the types are interestingly varied; but plain truth exacts the statement that over them all the voice and presence dominant in petty authority is that of Erin.

## VII.

ONCE arrived before the dingy building, on a narrow cross-street, where a faded sign proclaimed her father's name and business, Lily dismissed her brougham.

"Now I have burnt my ships, daddy," she said, following an astonished clerk into the den that contained Eliphalet. "And there is nothing but to submit. I've come to make a day of it, and you have me on your hands."

Mr. Curtis felt inclined to pinch himself and wonder whether or not he was Caliph of Bagdad. He was standing at a desk, going over the columns of a great ledger, when she came in,

and his face looked gray and tired. But it brightened amazingly when he found that his girl had come to him of her own accord to seek his companionship, after some manner of which the plan was not yet entirely perfected. As to the juniors of the staid mercantile establishment, their eyes blinked with excitement. Such an event as the visit of this houri had not been known at Curtis's in the memory of the house.

"It's such a lovely day after the storm, dad, and I've such a longing for a rampage," Lily said, nestling up to his arm when she got him finally into the street. "Take me over the Brooklyn Bridge and to the Bartholdi Statue. I mean to make you climb up—up every step—to the very torch; and to

the Stock Exchange; and perhaps to the top of the Equitable Building. I don't really care much where we go, only it must be like the old Saturday afternoons when we lived in the old house. And I'm hungry, sir, remember. You're expected to stand treat, and handsomely."

Eliphalet, who on the subject of treats for growing womanhood had but a crude general reminiscence of the ice cream saloons of his youth, rallied his scattered faculties to propose resorting to a famous restaurant.

"Is that where you lunch every day, dear?" Lily asked. "Because if it isn't there is no manner of use in suggesting it. Come now, be fair and square, and take me to your favorite

place, to eat your favorite dish, and nothing else."

For the first time in many a long day she saw her father's thin face broaden to laughter.

"By George, I'll do it, Lil!" he exclaimed. "What would your mother say if she knew it was pork and beans?"

Lily never forgot her introduction to the little back parlor of Mistress Betty Jones, where the landlady, who was also cook, served them with the succulent dainty beloved of Eliphalet since childhood. The whole place was admirably clean, and the patrons were quiet decent folk, on whose steady patronage old Betty could rely.

After luncheon Lily, like a will-o'-the-wisp, led her father from point to

point of the lower portion of the town, where it pleased her vagrant fancy to remember she had heard of strangers going.

"You are to consider me a Jersey cousin, dad," her orders were. "And show me every place I read of in the daily papers."

"I'd have my hands full, Lil, and you'd be pretty soon tired out."

"Oh, never! I feel so strong in this atmosphere where everything is moving. Don't look so scared, dad, when any one jostles against me. I'm not salt or sugar. I'm just one of them. I want to keep on with the crowd that never ends and never rests, and find what they are looking for."

"That's your young blood, my girl. Confound me, though, if I don't be-

lieve you're as good a Yankee as they make 'em."

"No, but I'm the best sort of an American. I like poor old New York they abuse so, because she's a type of our grand country. Where, on the other side, did anybody ever see a throng like this, all the nations pushing forward neck and neck, so confident, so eager? And when I think that they can't exhaust us, of course I'm proud. I'm eaten up with pride!"

"'T sounds like a Fourth o' July oration, Lil," her father answered, looking at her glowing face with his own share of the feeling she had tried to put into words.

Boarding the little boat that runs to accommodate pilgrims to the shrine of Liberty, they visited Bedloe's Island,

where the brazen goddess holds her court; and returning thence crossed the bridge in a cable-car, to walk home along the way for pedestrians. It was a beautiful midwinter day, a fair sample of the wondrous elastic atmosphere and dazzling sunshine with which Providence has of late years favored New York at frequent intervals; weather variously attributed by the wiseacres to whims of the Gulf Stream deflected from its course, and to the irrigation of far Western plains, but acceptable to all. To stand midway on the bridge, a spider's web of steel that links the two great cities, to watch the life afloat of the mighty stream below, is a sensation not to be despised by the most *blasé* of travelers. Lily, always susceptible of impressions, and keyed to ex-



citement by hurtling winds and active exercise, threw herself with delight into the enjoyment of the scene. Looking over at an outgoing steamship, her decks black with people, she was tempted to wave her hand and cry exultingly :

“ Good-by, good-by ! I am sorry for you. You are going away from the beautiful land of youth and hope to the old world that has done its best—”

“ Why, Lily ! ” said her father. “ This doesn’t look much like what your mother tells me we’ve got to expect for you.”

“ O father ! ” the girl exclaimed, with an April change of face. “ That’s what I came to talk to you about. I put it off because—because I wanted so to be my own old self—your little

Lil, away with her daddy for a lark once more—one little time more.”

“Then you’re going to marry the English gentleman, my dear?”

Eliphalet, with true American shyness of a title, would have styled his future son-in-law “Mr. Melrose” had it been feasible. As it was, his choice of a phrase had the ill luck to strike Lily an unexpected blow. An English gentleman—which English gentleman? Alas for the possibility of the suggestion. For the life of her, Lily could not now speak the words her father waited patiently to hear.

“Well, I don’t say it aint a trial,” Eliphalet went on, “to have to live in the London climate and drink lukewarm water to your meals. But your mother says you’ll be spending a good

spell in the country every year, and will likely keep your health. She says we've got no call to put our notions in the way of such a marriage for you, and"—here he sighed grievously—"I guess Amelia's right. Your mother always was a master-hand to manage. I can't say I take much stock in lords,"—another woeful sigh,—“but I guess Amelia's right.”

Looking as cheerful as an undertaker at his post of duty, Mr. Curtis strode along, Lily's grasp tightening upon his arm.

“Listen to me, dad,” she at last said rapidly. “In two days, you know, Lord Melrose will be coming back from Florida, and then, if I'm an honorable girl and fit to be your daughter, I must give him a final answer. Your

word's as good as your bond, daddy, I've heard people say, and so must mine be. My answer's got to be the truth. And I don't love him. Oh, I don't! I don't! But I like him: he's kind and gentle; he never turned his back on me, and treated me as if I were a horrid, heartless thing that couldn't feel. He doesn't think I'm a miserable little worldly time-server that values a man only for outside advantages. He wouldn't break my heart, and go off and not care a bit."

"To be sure he wouldn't, Lil," said her father, surprised at her unnecessary vehemence.

"We like the same things—horses, I mean, and dogs, and the country, and yachting; and I'd be happy, maybe, in his ways."

"So your ma says, deary," interposed Mr. Curtis, catching at a straw. "She says you'll soon be to home with the old women and the flannel petticoats. But there'll be a lot of moving house in the one year, and you'll likely miss some of our conveniences. Well, well, when I think how those fellows over there bow down and cotton to a lord—whew!"

Poor Eliphalet, whose sentiment had its boundaries, was becoming somewhat bewildered at her attitude. In his mind girls were girls, all of them inclined to be flighty and hysterical when the marriage question is discussed. For so many months had his Amelia schooled him to believe that the union of Lily with Lord Melrose was meet, right, and most desirable,

that, having accepted the idea, he was not prepared to drop it suddenly. He tried to quiet her agitation by patting the hand upon his arm. A larger soul might have divined the trouble of her poor little maiden heart.

"What I wanted to ask you, father," Lily resumed, "is whether I'm giving him enough?"

"Enough! Well, I should smile," quoth the material Eliphalet.

"No one knows. No one can understand," the girl thought, alone in her pretty chamber that night. She had sent away the tiresome, officious maid, and sat, her eyes plunged into the depths of a mirror framed in silver, and decorated with candles, like a shrine. Littering the room were the dainty belongings wealth is able to

confer upon fortunate maidenhood. What to less favored mortals of her class is the heart's desire of useless luxury encompassed her. In the reflection offered by her mirror she saw fine textures, unbroken lines of youth, exquisite flesh tints, a loosened abundance of hair that was a glory; none of the poignant suggestions of beauty having run its course that are like tiny daggers to the wisest woman in her maturity; all to win love and hold it she possessed, and yet—and yet—her heart of twenty years was aching wearily!

Impatiently she put out her candles, and, going to the window, drew aside the curtain and looked out into the night. Somewhere a clock was striking twelve. In the square beneath a few

hurrying figures were seen, for the weather had changed, and it was coming on to snow. In most houses the lights of downstairs had been extinguished, and those in the upper stories burned with a softened glow behind the window-shades. Like herself, many another had sought the moment of isolation when the day's events and the secrets of the heart meet together to be reviewed and analyzed. Ah, that time of pitiless introspection that, like *Atra Cura*, waits on all of us, when wrongs done, hasty words spoken, love alienated, unworthy passions loosed to work their destroying will, good impulses stifled, lost opportunities, throng and "dreadfully beset" the undefended citadel of memory !

Lily, sweet soul, who had harmed no



one but herself, as a bird tears its breast against a brier, thought she might dedicate this lonely hour to wondering again why the man she loved had gone away, without a word to show the gladness his eyes had spoken at seeing her, after long months of absence. She had tried so hard, so hard to forget him. The chance meeting of their gaze at the opera proved with what success. She now even struggled to persuade herself that she was mistaken about his looks, his bearing, the charm his personality had had for her. But more than a year's absence from sight counted for nothing since she had seen him again. He was taller, grander, better to look at than all other men. At one word of bid-

ding from him she would quit home, fortune, family, and roam the wide world at his side. And he would not speak that word, or any word. His obstinate silence, his strength of manhood enabling him to keep away from her, were like a wall of rock against which her lamentations beat like waves. And the rock did not feel the waves. "With all my soul and strength I love you," he had said—and left her.

This cruel thought made Lily blush in the darkness. She felt ready to die of shame at her longing and her pain. It nerved her to face the consideration of the new life into which events seemed crowding her forward with tremendous force. It was now virtually settled that on the arrival of Mel-

rose their betrothal should take place. In a few days every one would hear of it, and the heart of Ernest Jencks would be wrenched away from her forever. The first act of her little commonplace life-drama would be ended and forgot. Books said, everybody of experience told her, that first loves were as apt to float away from memory as thistledowns upon a summer breeze. A youth's fancy, a maiden's love-dream, of what value are they in history? If to marry as she now proposed would make the happiness of Melrose and her mother, Lily in her pride of spirit had no fear but that she could live down the other.

Occupied with such uncheerful musings, the young girl saw from her post

a light burning in the window of a neighbor, whose child she remembered to have heard was very ill. By the electric chain of memory she was led to connect this circumstance with an experience of her friend Grace Emory the year before. So deeply had it impressed her that the very words Grace had used in describing it came to her ear again. The Emorys, who had been dining from home, and had left their children in apparent good health, returned at eleven o'clock to find their house astir with the confusion of sudden illness. Hal, the little golden-haired sailor laddie of their fondest love, had been stricken with some malady unknown: had awaked, calling his mother, who came not until, bursting into the room in her evening

dress, poor Grace gathered her treasure in her arms, and prayed for strength to bear what was to come. The doctor, hastily summoned, found her in silk attire with bare arms, her ornaments and flowers torn despairingly from her to strew the floor, while she knelt at the boy's feet and laved them in a hot bath. That night, the next, and the next, Grace never slept. Pneumonia, swift and deadly, had laid hold upon her darling. Trained nurses, the kindest ministry of friends, came to her aid, but at last there was a night watch when it seemed likely that no love of earth could stay the little life about to pass. Dimmed with suffering, his wide blue eyes sought his mother; his feeble grasp retained her; the rose-leaf spots

of fever had faded from his cheeks, a faint blue shadow was gathering around the mouth that had yielded merriment and kisses: Grace, whose whole yearning soul was in her gaze, forgot all besides the child given her in anguish, about to be taken from her in anguish, and the wave of sorrow bowed her down.

"I thought I had lost him, Lily," Grace had said. "In that moment, when I touched the depths, I felt my husband's arms close around me. I felt his heart-beats. I felt the soothing of his love. It was a divine message telling me to live. O Lily, dear! I knew then that there are times in every woman's life when nothing but love is worth anything."

And with her eyes fixed upon the

opposite casement, now glimmered to red in the surrounding gloom, Lily kept vigil with such thoughts. "It was for the last time," she pleaded with herself; "the very, very last."

## VIII.

THE day appointed for the return of Lord Melrose from his travels in the South was closely followed by that fixed for the accomplishment of a scheme by which the superfluities of fashion were to be made to supply the needs of charity ; in other words, a costume ball for the benefit of a favorite good work.

This entertainment, the very "rose and crown" of many hopes, was to be given in the picturesque Venetian palace of the arts that, instead of arising from waves that kiss its feet, is prosaically placed at the intersection of two busy thoroughfares, where car-



tracks cross, and the interminable tide of traffic on wheels ebbs and flows. To prelude the ball a number of its participants had arranged dinners at their own houses, to which were bidden enough guests to form a double quadrille, each party choosing a period to illustrate by costumes and device in decoration of the feast. Later all the banqueters were to unite in dancing for the admiration of those who had enjoyed their soup and roast at home, attired in medieval splendor, and beset with gloomy consciousness of suppressed derision among the wondering attendants of their everyday demands. No feature of a fancy ball is more formidable than the first exhibition of one's-self in lendings assumed with diffidence as embodying one's own

"conception of the part." The sheepish descent of his staircase by a middle-aged father of a family who has consented to go as a courtier in pink tights and puffy knee-breeches, curled wig and flapping hat, is a pleasant spectacle for the maids who congregate and giggle upon the basement stairs. Mr. Pickwick's scorn of Mr. Tupman as a bandit is nothing by comparison with the feelings of a wife who beholds her lord in tin armor, struggling to find his pocket-handkerchief.

It is not my intention to give a detailed account of the great fancy ball that kept newswriters busy for a week, alternated with reports of street-car strikes and riots by citizens who had no fancy dresses to distract their minds. Such descriptions are so familiar to

the novel-reader that he or she may turn to the one liked best in fiction and fit it to my scene. The "whirling medley of Greeks, Turks, flower-girls, and monks" we usually read about was here, only varied by a general determination on the part of the committee toward historical and picturesque costumes. It was consequently an affair on more grandiose proportions than any seen before it in New York. The effects were admirably planned: the groups mounting and descending the wide marble stairway between antique tapestries and palms, and beef-eaters, hired from the Casino theater; the balustrades hung with cloth of gold; the reception committee bowing and curtsying to slow music under silken banners that sub-

dued the light ; the quadrilles danced in a roped inclosure amid the liberal criticism of on-lookers who trod upon one another's toes to climb on the benches ; the utter inability of any reveler to make out what his neighbor's costume was meant to represent, inducing upon most faces a rather vacant stare—all these were salient features of the brilliant show.

Everybody was happy ; at least, so everybody said. Some exceptions there might have been—the mothers of young ladies who had gone to the most untold pains and expense to get up costumes, and who saw their darlings flattened unseen against a wall ; the men who reached the supper-room after the champagne had given out ; the weary husbands supporting the

doorways with dislocating yawns, and thinking of the office at 9 A.M. to-morrow, while their wives waltzed ceaselessly; the youngster whose maiden fair had derided his false mustache; the doorkeeper who stood shivering in the wintry draught, longing to exchange his fur-trimmed but airy Martin Luther tunic for an overcoat; the reporters, despairingly jotting down their impressions, and rushing away to present next morning's readers of their newspapers with Mrs. Jones in Mrs. Smith's costume—to describe the festive appearance in public of new-made widowers—and to conjure from their graves, as guests, people who had long since renounced mortal vanities with breath. It is not known whether the participants so enumer-

ated felt the game was worth the candle.

One portion of the community indulged in enjoyment unalloyed of this famous spectacle. I refer to the lookers-on not supplied with tickets costing ten dollars each, who clustered around the awning at the carriage-way, giving free vent to their artless admiration.

"Springing lightly to the sidewalk, Lord Halfred hassisted the fair Hemmer to halight," commented a lively newsboy, as a hero, with sword protruding from his ulster, and arctic overshoes by way of finish to his tights, got out of his carriage and helped a lady to descend.

"For the continuation of this thrilling tale see the 'Family Story

Paper' for next week," cried a second voice.

"To be had at all the news stands, price ten cents," remarked a third.

"Get on to your legs, mister," was the next remark, as from the open door of a brougham protruded a spindle shank with a huge buckled shoe.

"Them's beetle-crushers," was pleasantly said about another display of feet incased in a pair of seventeenth century *poulaines*, or pointed shoes.

"Aint she a sky-scraper?" fell to the lot of a matron who wore the hen-nin, or head-dress, of the chatelaines of ancient France.

The difficulties of a Doge of Venice, who discovered that he had left his money in his other pocket and had not wherewithal to pay his cab fare, oc-

casioned exquisite delight. The unfortunate Doge, finally invited by his cabby to come out and settle the matter with his fists, was detained upon the curbstone until he contracted a severe cold in the head. And it may be stated that none of the episodes of the event seemed to have gained such wide renown as that of the Crusader in full coat of mail, who, returning home in broad daylight next morning, was left by his hansom upon the parental door-steps, where, for want of a latch-key, he remained for an hour, chilled to the bone and furiously ringing, attended by two policemen, the milkman, and a gathering street mob.

At one of the most beautiful of the preliminary banquets Miss Floyd-Curtis made her appearance. Her en-



gagement with Lord Melrose having just been formally announced, they went in and were placed together at the feast. The young Englishman, in the becoming garb of a cavalier of Venice in the seventeenth century, wore jauntily his *cote-hardi* of blue and red, with the close-fitting blue tights and red velvet pointed shoes, the skull-cap of velvet carrying a pheasant's feather, with jeweled pouch and dagger at his belt. He was an appropriate pendant to the radiant creature at his side.

Lily's costume revived that of a Venetian princess at the same period. It was in damask of two shades of orange and canary yellow, with flowing sleeves of golden tissue, and upon her hair was perched a tiny cap with gold

and topaz ornaments. Around her white throat she wore a string of topaz with sapphire pendants. Every woman has her supreme moment of best looks, and this was Lily's. In the luminous shimmer of these draperies her peculiar coloring was seen to its full advantage. Her eyes shone as if lighted with golden gleams, her cheeks were blooming richly, her laugh came readily.

In the great paneled dining-room where they sat were high friezes of mellow canvas, painted by long-gone hands and reft from a genuine palace of the Adriatic. The table, reproducing in form the one seen in the Paul Veronese "Marriage at Cana," was draped with old Genoese velvet of ruby hue, covered again with squares

of convent needlework in lace, and spread with a burden that was a joy to color-loving eyes. In the center a huge boar's head, stuffed and garlanded, rose from a golden dish. On each side were peacocks spreading their iridescent tails, and platters high piled with oranges and pines and grapes. Golden beakers, flagons of crystal, vases from which sheaves of tulips sprung, loose roses of deepest crimson with fronds of maidenhair, were scattered about the board. Attendants in costume, a band subdued by distance, the soft light of innumerable candles, the luster of rare stuffs and glowing jewels, the disposition of the guests upon one side only of the table, all combined to heighten the illusion of this royal picture of medie-

val Venice. Later, at the ball, Lily, waving back and forth her great fan of yellow ostrich-plumes set in an amber stick, looked like a queen wielding her scepter. She enjoyed the homage of the crowd, the admiration, the congratulations. When she danced with her lover a consciousness of new importance lent to her tread a statelier spring. When she laid her gloved hand upon his arm to move away she tried to feel glad as well as proud that she had been his choice.

Melrose, on his side, was more genuinely touched by her beauty and her confidingness than he had believed possible. His dormant pride of race awoke at thought of the opportunity this American daughter of the people had given him to build up anew the

failing fortunes of his house. Resolutions for future good, like broken cobwebs, floated through his brain. He felt strongly and sincerely a disgust for the unworthy passions that had left for this innocent young girl but a love that must needs be nursed and cherished into honorable strength.

Melrose had yielded Lily to some other man and strolled off alone, musing of these things, and was gazing down at the pageant on the stairs, when a fan touched him on the shoulder from behind. Before turning to see who it was he recognized a scent of mignonette inseparable from Mrs. Bertie Clay.

A woman quick of apprehension, as was she, could not have failed to perceive the resentful expression of his

eyes when he returned her greeting. Whatever this meant, she ignored it airily as at her request he offered her his arm.

"I've been so clever in shaking off the man who brought me here," she said. "Now, before he comes back from the errand I've sent him on, I look to you to save me. Besides, I'm tired. I want to sit down in a quiet corner. I want a chance to congratulate my friend."

"I say, suppose we drop that," he said, when they began to thread the crowd.

"Oh! but you know I feel so proud, I'm like a child who's been building a card-house. There's always the excitement, too, of fearing that the house may tumble down."

"I'd like to know your meaning. I'll swear you are too bad."

"Not too bad for you?"

"You mock at everything. You make a man feel no woman can be—"

"Hush! or you'll be getting rude," she cried, as they found seats in a cushioned alcove under a swinging lamp. "You might at least be civil enough to tell me how you like my frock. Every other man I've met to-night has been inspired to eloquence."

She had, with her usual perversity, declined to follow rules, and appeared in an Eastern drapery of mull like woven air, with chains of Indian gold to bind it, and golden broideries around the hem.

"You look very nice. You were

always a woman to suit those Indian stuffs."

"Don't you remember the one I wore that day on the drag going down to Richmond? You said it needed gold; you kept everybody waiting while you got me yellow roses."

Melrose stirred uncomfortably.

"Ah! but how long ago," he said, as lightly as might be. "So much has happened since then—"

"And we've been such *bons camarades*. I fancy your going really to be married makes me think of it. A woman can't help indulging in sentiment about her—early friendships."

"Come now," the young man said resolutely. "You have sought this talk, not I. You must have got the letter I sent over a week ago?"



"I burnt it," she said, toying with her fan nervously. "It was too cruel to be kept."

"I am glad you burnt it. But I am not ashamed of it," he said, deliberating over his words. "I don't want to cut you up, you know, but those were things I had to say. It was best to make the future clear."

"That you do not desire my intimacy with Lily to continue. That I, in short, will not be welcomed at your house," she said sharply. "Isn't this a reward for unselfishness? What if she knew my share in securing her great prize? And what delightful reading for her would be certain old letters—"

"What!—you would dare?"

"If, I was going to say—if I had not destroyed them too," she hurried

on, warned by a flash of anger of his eye. "You asked me to do so, don't you know, when the thing began to take shape seriously."

Melrose drew a long breath of relief.

"Any other woman," he said, "I should not despair of convincing that whatever I once was, I'm now thoroughly in earnest."

"Go on. So disinterested! It's beautiful," she said, with a soft laugh.

"But you're one there's no dealing with in the ordinary way. You'd make any man a brute. Knowing you as I do, and as they do not, how could this have been otherwise."

"You like phrases," she said contemptuously. "I go everywhere. I'm in with everybody. I've made these

poor little *parvenues*, and I've made your affair."

"Don't speak of it to me. I forbid it. It would have been so in any case. She is the sweetest, most honest—"

"Of course she is; and if she had been a beggar-maid King Cophetua would have stooped just the same. But it is I who am aggrieved. How could I suppose that you would deliberately shut a door in my poor face—I, whom the world has used so roughly—"

"It seems to me you have got even with the world," he burst out.

Barbara smiled plaintively.

"Then it is because you have never forgiven me? That you want to punish me?"

"You persist in exaggerating. If I was ready to blow my brains out when you threw me overboard, I soon learned to be content with fate. The idea of being angry with you for dropping me! oh, no!"

A glow came into her pale face.

"If you mean that I put you under an obligation—" she began.

"My dear Mrs. Clay," said Melrose, interrupting, "you, who are the cleverest of women, ought to let this thing be easier for both of us."

"But you are taking from me everything. These people are indispensable to me. Oh, but it is too much!"

Melrose stood unmoved.

"It would really have been better for you not to talk to me, you know," he said presently.

"I have always refused to quarrel," she cried out—losing balance in face of his fatal self-control.

"Then we'd better be getting back," he answered.

"But I never forget an insult. Take care!"

"That is what I mean to do," he said. There was a moment's silence. Then she took his arm again, and they went back into the ball-room.

The long probation serving in lieu of an engagement, Lord Melrose had begged that the marriage might take place at the end of April, and Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, after some debate with Mrs. Clay as to what the world would say, consented.

Across the Atlantic flashed forth-

with cable messages of weighty import to the Parisian potentate of millinery, whose assistance in such matters is equal in importance to that of the clergyman. Lily's girl friends, not to be astonished by trousseaux however gorgeous, owned to pangs of darkling envy at sight of the cards attached to sundry little tokens forwarded to Washington Square by English steamers. The names upon such bits of pasteboard, in whatever ink they might have been originally printed, underwent a chemical change on arriving in America, and were seen to glow with the glitter of purest gold.

Lily's individual excitement, enhanced by the confusion of a great city in a delirium of Centennial fervor and that of a society rent by interne-

cine warfare on the subject of precedence at the Centennial ball, caused her physician to recommend a temporary change of air. Lord Melrose, at whose disposal had been put a yacht, thought of a week's idling in the bay of Chesapeake, under the warm sunshine of the Virginia coast, in whatever company she might select. This expedition being settled, Mrs. Floyd-Curtis discovered that her presence was indispensable in town, and proposed as her substitute Mrs. Bertie Clay. She was surprised and not a little displeased at the positive disapproval exhibited by her prospective son-in-law to this scheme. Even Lily, when consulted, seceded from her supposed allegiance to the charming Barbara, suggesting in her

stead the Emorys, husband and wife and children, a plan to which events finally worked around to the satisfaction of all concerned. If Mrs. Floyd-Curtis had cherished any secret doubt of the eligibility of Mrs. Emory as a chaperone for the soon to be Lady Melrose, it was dissipated by the discovery that Grace had been asked by the committee and had declined to dance in the Centennial quadrille.

After some days of welcome separation from their fellow-men, the yacht party touched at Fortress Monroe for letters and supplies. Sea and sky and April-girdled shores were beautiful exceedingly, when the two gentlemen, accompanied by Hal and Gladys, put off from the yacht for a morning at the Hygeia. The women, having an-



nounced their intention to loaf amid rugs and cushions on the deck, fell, when abandoned, into one of the long and intimate talks which had of late been so strong a stay to Lily. Grace, quick-witted and sympathetic, guessed something of the struggle in the girl's heart, but when the conversation drifted to the point of confidence she had always deemed it best to turn aside the current.

"How bright, how buoyant the air is here," she said. "Surely a sea more blue never rocked a fairy boat on its wavelets. I am in a lotos-eating dream. With Fred and the children, I should be satisfied to go on thus eternally."

"Not you," said Lily. "You are too active. You'd be wanting to reorganize your crew, and get up a mer-

maid chorus, or change your course or something, before a month had passed. Next year, Melrose says, we shall probably be yachting among the Western Isles, and then you must all come and make another party with us. I shall feel that, after my father and mother, when I give you up I'm leaving behind me the best part of America."

"America salutes!" cried her friend gayly. "What you suggest would be only too enticing: I should always be thinking, though, of poor McLeod of Dare. Now, Lily, I mean to tell you that Lord Melrose has quite won over Fred and me. It did seem too much to expect to have one's friend marry and soar away into the English aristocracy, and *like* the culprit who's

responsible for the calamity. But he's so simple and straightforward—and kind. No one who sees him as we do now can help feeling friends with him. My dear, you *must* be happy."

"Yes, he is all you say," the girl replied. She had turned aside her head, and was gazing seaward. Grace saw that her eyes were full of tears, and at this juncture a sailor passing them announced that the yacht's boat had put off from the dock of the hotel.

"Those darlings!" exclaimed Mrs. Emory, meaning her offspring. "How they will chatter when I get them back! And the steward has confided to me that we shall be the richer for fresh rolls and eggs and some fat Virginia ducklings and green pease. Last, but not least, our letters! I can under-

stand a man's fancy for getting out of the reach of telegrams and letters, but after a week's blank one welcomes an echo from the world of everyday."

Lily, who had no desire to make an exhibition of her eyes, escaped to her cabin, where, a little later, a number of envelopes were put into her hands. Letters from her mother she read at once. Those from casual friends she glanced at. Last to attract her notice was a thick package addressed to her in the familiar chirography of Barbara Clay.

It was not until evening that Lily felt inclined to break the seal of Barbara's epistle. Grace, who was in her own stateroom tucking away her children to their rest, and crooning to them the lullabies they were not too big to

love, fancied that from Lily's quarters she heard an exclamation of distress.

"Lily, dear, may I come in?" she cried, tapping at the door. "It's too absurd, but I imagined you were in pain."

"It is nothing. I am reading. I will come to you presently," Lily's voice answered, and Grace went back, light-hearted, to her pleasant toil.

Lily sat staring wildly at a sheet of notepaper scrawled with Mrs. Clay's bold English handwriting. On her lap and around her feet lay others in envelopes of which the seals had long been broken.

These letters I inclose for your amusement on your voyage. They were written by a man who has vowed vows to many women, and whose motive in marrying you you will find herein discussed. Some of them have been for years in my possession. The most re-

cent will enlighten you upon any points that may seem to be obscure. They are the wedding present to you of

BARBARA CLAY.

With hot hands the young girl gathered together the scattered envelopes. All of them bore the same superscription, all of them were written by Melrose. For a moment she covered her eyes and tried to think. Within her brain suspicions whirled thick and fast like November leaves before the storm. Then resolutely she went out on deck to find her lover.

Melrose was alone and smoking. He threw away his cigar and advanced to meet her. At that hour they had been accustomed to walk and talk together.

"I came—I came," Lily panted, facing him with blazing eyes—"I came

to bring you these. I have not read them. I don't want to handle them."

He knew by intuition what serpent had entered into his Eden. He took the packet Lily relinquished with haughty finger-tips, and stood frowning.

"It is like her," he muttered. "She is a Thug who loves to do her stabbing in the back."

"It is true, then?"

"True that a creature, who has for years made a deliberate practice of toying with emotions she can no longer feel, got me into her net. Yes, that is true."

"That she is only one of many women. That—that—oh, I can't, I can't! Here is her hateful letter. Take it and read it and see for your-

self that it has poisoned all my life, that between us two there can never be anything again."

Melrose was astonished at the passionate protest in her voice. It was rising moonlight, and he could see that her face was pale and convulsed, like a classic mask of tragedy. He sought to soothe her, but breaking away from him with shuddering sobs, she went below.

The events of Lily's life following this were brief and crowded. Cutting imperiously short the *Iolanthe's* cruise, she induced her friends to return with her to town. Too well she realized the battle there to be fought. Brusquely, and without preparation, she announced to her mother



her intention to break off her marriage with Melrose. Whether most to lament this deplorable result, or the treachery that caused it, the distracted mother could not at first tell. To her, for a short space, the universe turned upside down. A second glance at the situation showed Mrs. Floyd-Curtis that even the enormity of Mrs. Clay's offense was nothing beside the stinging blow of the failure of Lily's marriage. With tireless arguments, with tender prayers, with floods of tears, she besought her child to reconsider her rash determination. Poor Eliphalet, pressed into service as an advocate, and carefully drilled into what he should say, offered Lily no refuge from the pressure that narrowed upon her day by day.

Even Grace, her one hope, gravely kissing her upon the brow, counseled her to weigh well a decision that would entail so much suffering and distress upon those she loved, as well as harshest criticism upon herself.

"They are all against me," said poor Lily desperately, and driven to bay. She had shut herself in her room, pacing the floor, clasping her hands, her heart beating with obstinate determination. In this crisis, when she stood facing, as it were, the weal or woe of her whole future life, who was there to whom it could possibly mean as much as to her? One word of a counselor she could trust would be of infinite relief, especially if that counselor were to cast the balance on the side she

wanted. For back, with a bound, had sped her heart to the one love of her life. A certainty that if she could see him, speak to him, break down that dreadful barrier of time and absence, he would help and sustain her faltering steps, came to her swift and strong. And then Lily did one of those foolish things that have no excuse save in impetuous youth. She took from a sacred corner the little book the professor had left with her, telling her whenever she needed him to send the book, and he would come, were it from the world's end. She wrapped it up, and wrote his name and address upon the card, then, ringing for a servant, dispatched the parcel to the nearest mail station. When the door closed, she

threw herself upon her knees beside her bed, and prayed that her token might speed in safety to its goal.

This action, seeing that Lily's engagement to Lord Melrose had not been canceled, was indefensible by the canons of good form. Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, who did not fail to become at once aware of it, intercepted the messenger, and was shocked that her daughter should stoop to exhibit such a weakness. Not in the least understanding Lily's intention,—or the book,—she took care to suppress what seemed at the very least an overture toward correspondence with the obscure and uninteresting Jencks. Without ceremony she consigned Mr. Lang's delightful essays to the flames, saying nothing of the matter, and

thankful for the reward her vigilance had met. Most mothers will agree with her that a young girl should be forcibly restrained from committing follies sure to bring on her the condemnation of the society by whose laws she stands adjudged.

In the case of Melrose, it must certainly be said that he behaved very well. He even showed to Lily's mother his letter written from Florida to Mrs. Clay. Mrs. Floyd-Curtis, in return, asked him to be patient, and to make allowance for Lily's high-strung and romantic disposition. She did not consider herself bound to give confidence for confidence by telling all she knew of Mr. Jencks.

Day after day Lily waited for an answer that never came, and at the

end of April she married Lord Melrose.

The particulars of a wedding so much and so recently discussed are here superfluous. Lily's was in no way original. She wore white, looked beautiful, had six bridesmaids, cried a little at parting with her parents, and sailed that day for England.

For a time her friends the Emorys, who talked of her constantly with tenderest regard, heard only in a general way of the movements of the new Countess of Melrose. She was much admired, and had been received everywhere with kindness. When, after some months, a letter came from her to Mrs. Emory, Grace read it a second time before handing it to Fred.

"It is because I want to be quite sure she—"

"Well, are you?" asked her husband, accustomed to be the interpreter of her unfinished sentence.

"She is her own sweet self. She is young and brave and loyal, and you will see how good he has been to her—"

"Then, pray, why do you sigh?"

There was a short silence. Then Grace said, smiling, though he saw that tears were in her eyes :

" ' Nothing will bring back the hour  
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower.' "

THE END.













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